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MY NEIGHBOR:

A STORY IN VERSE.

WITH

OTHER PIECES.

BY THOMAS D. JAMES.

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MY NEIGHBOR,

A STORY IN VERSE.

Part First.

WILL DELORING.

The sun had shed his setting glow
Of glory o'er the fields of snow,
But, slowly sinking, lingered still
With parting smile on snow-crowned hill,
Rested a moment on the height,
And then, descending, bade Good-Night.
Yet distant clouds of upper skies
(Scarce seen by unobservant eyes
So high and far they soared away)
Caught later glimpses of his ray
Speeding to ether-depths profound,
And cast them, glittering, to the ground.
And thus no sudden change was made
From evening shine to evening shade;
Had you not watched the sinking sun,
Nor listened to the evening gun,

So gently was the light withdrawn
You might not know the day was gone.

When the fond mother at her breast
Has soothed and sung her babe to rest,
With gentle rise and stealthy tread,
Moving toward the cradle bed,
The drooping form with care she places
Beneath the blanket's warm embraces.
Faintly and yet more faintly rise
The lowly murmured lullabies;
Gently and yet more gently tip
The patting fingers winning sleep;
Till hand and voice no longer meet
To practise love's benign deceit,
But, hand withdrawn and voice repressed,
She leaves her baby to its rest,
Unconscious that maternal arms
And lullabies have ceased their charms.
Thus, slowly, gently, Evening spread
Her misty coverlet of shade
O'er all the weary sons of toil
Retiring from the day's turmoil.

As stealthy twilight grew apace,
As vanished every sunlit trace,
As hastened the returning host
Of crows to seek the nightly roost,
As creatures wont afar to roam
Sought now in turn the sheltering home,
And men from busy cares were turning
To where their household fires were burning,
From the low foot of steepy street,
Where tide-waves washed the city's feet,
A steamboat left the wharf-stayed shore.
Few were the passengers it bore;
For 'tis not when the winds grow bleak
A rural home the many seek;
Not when the rude-mouthed Boreas blows
The swelling tide of travel flows,
Nor when Orion rules the night
The darkening hours abroad invite.

Yet some would boldly face the gale
Even when wintry storms prevail,
And, from the city's dust and din
And tug of toil, their way would win

To purer air and wider scene—
What though the unchecked winds are keen,
And shrieking blasts besiege their cot!
They know their voice and fear them not.
Nor is he lover staunch and true
Who only the loved form would view
Clad in her costliest attire,
And robed as Fashion's hosts require;
But him the sweetest passions press
Who seeks her in her chaste undress,
Who wooes her in her homely moods,
And seeks her in her solitudes.

A lingering autumn's tinted haze
Had mellowed all December's days,
And claimed the streams for venturous keel,
By icy bonds unfettered still.
And though the stormy winds at last
Had sown their white flakes thick and fast,
These found in differing wills and moods
The quiet fields and restless floods—
The land a peaceful welcome gave;
The rivers, a vast watery grave.

And still they flowed in victor guise
And mirrored back exulting skies;
And still the venturous Water Fay
Plied her brief voyage day by day.

Of the late few that eve who sought
A homeward travel on the boat
I mark but one:—no careless glance
Might note the lofty brow's expanse,
Or find beneath the plain attire
The heart and brain and strength and fire
That waged, in proudest manliness,
Life's eager warfare with success;
Or in the unwonted downcast mood
That signalled deep solicitude,
Bearing him downward to the dust,
Serenest hope, profoundest trust.

But Will Deloring's earliest days
Had seen him led in wisdom's ways,
With every thought and every power
Squared to the duties of the hour.

An honest sire had trained the boy
In useful craft to seek employ;
Had ever taught his son to find
Delight and industry combined;
In honor's pathway e'er to tread,
And in that peaceful path had led.
A mother's love had been the star
To lead his seeking steps from far
At Bethlehem's shrine his vows to pay,
And all his heart's best treasures lay.

Thus trained to toil, to virtue trained,
He fought the fight, the vantage gained
In life's sharp contest. Hand of skill,
And purpose high, and strength of will,
And industry unwearied, brought
The honest guerdon that he sought
To meet the ever growing claim
Of loving ones that bore his name.

Not lust of wealth, nor vulgar greed,
But prudent thought for future need

Had nerved his arm and taxed his mind
Accruing competence to find;
And heart inflamed with patriot zeal
To speed his struggling country's weal
Had made him join, with trust complete,
That country's pleading wants to meet;
And simple bonds with promise traced
Attested where his faith he placed.

But scarcely shall it worthy seem
Of muse—or high and noble theme—
To tell of constant clouds and cares
That strife of worldly purpose wears;
Of golden sinews that unbar
The gates of peace as well as war;
Of banks that meet the wants of trade
By loans on trusted sureties made;
And yet, the means God's hand employs
To mete us out our cares and joys,
To help us on our toilsome way
And shape our course from day to day,
Are still His means; nor may we call
His mission angels base or small.

While Will Deloring drove apace
His winning chariot in the race,
Increasing thrift required, at length,
Of golden sinews greater strength,
And for these growing needs, the funds
Were gained on borrower's pledge of bonds,
Which lay, secure for chance defaults,
Within the bank's well-guarded vaults.

Thus striving forward, day by day,
Through sunny fields his journey lay.
Until a sudden bolt of dread
Across his peaceful sky was sped.
That morn his quiet home he left,
Unconscious of the blackened weft
Malignant shuttle had, o'ernight,
Woven across his web of white;
But when the newsboy's morning sheet
He scanned, with night's dark deeds replete,
He learned, that while the watchmen slept,
Or failed in guard they should have kept,
The bank where all his sureties lay
As pledge of promises to pay—

To this a burglar band had gained
Admittance, and the vaults had drained.
On many heavy loss would fall;
His would be great—he lost his all,
And near the shadowy future drew,
With bankruptcy in fullest view.

But shattered as a luckless oak
That meets the lightning's shivering stroke,
Yet stoutly braves the tempest still,
So brave Deloring met the ill,
Resolved that stroke should smite but one—
To bear it, keep it, all his own.
And as at twilight hour he pressed
Toward his peaceful home of rest,
Where to quick listeners, night by night,
His coming footsteps gave delight,
The clamorous thoughts that filled his mind,
And cares he feign had left behind,
He still was seeking to repress
Before he met the home caress;
For well he knew each troublous thought
That in his tell-tale face was wrought,

Or care allowed his mind to move,
Would well be scanned by looks of love.

Rather than cabin-bound remain
Deloring sought the deck to gain,
Where freer air and view more free
Might yield the sought tranquillity,
Might drive away each haggard trace
That care had furrowed on his face.
Whate'er his griefs, 'twere wisdom now
To drive their footprints from his brow,
To shut them sternly from his view
Whate'er the morrow might renew.

He paced the cold deck to and fro,
In rapid stride or step more slow
As varying, hurrying thoughts obtrude,
Or change to slower, calmer mood.
Above him, as the deck he strode,
The ponderous vibrant beam pursued
Its ceaseless laboring course, and drave
The vessel through the yielding wave;

While swelling with its deep bass tone
The monstrous pipe gave forth its drone,
Soothing the care-excited mind
To music's tractive joys inclined.
He felt the influence of the sound
That filled the air with note profound,
And, yielding to the impulse strong
Of key-note swelling loud and long,
Deloring's voice broke forth in song;
While the huge pipe's sonorous throat
Breathed out its deep symphonic note.

SONG.

THE RETURNING BEE.

The restless bee on venturous wing
  Seeks far his precious spoil,
Where honeyed flowers their fragrance fling
  And tempt to eager toil.
But as the twilight curtains close,
  O'er many a league he wends,
To seek the humble hive's repose
  Where all his labor ends.

And I, when daily toils are o'er,
Would seek my distant cell,
Where all I love beneath the sun
And all that love me dwell;
And straight and swift my course shall prove,
Like that of hastening bee,
While honey lips and looks of love
Do wait and watch for me.

And now the steamer landward bore,
The landing reached. The plank ashore,
The living freight through darkening maze
Soon sped them on their several ways,
Nor long the footworn track that brought
Deloring to the home he sought.

The cottage was of small pretence,
Rising within encircling fence
'Mid trees and shrubs now stripped and bare,
Or covered with protecting care

By straw-wove mantles, thick and warm,
Against the shock of cold and storm.
Through swinging gate the pathway bore
That led him to the cottage door,
Which scarcely oped, a loving sprite
Rushed through the passage with delight,
With salutation and embrace
To meet the parent's own caress,
And give the first warm, welcome kiss.

Without delay he seeks the room
Where waits connubial welcome home.
Nor less a welcome waits him there,
Though less of glow its offerings wear;
For ocean depths are just as deep
When in serenity they sleep,
As when the waking winds impel
And ocean's loftiest billows swell.
Serene and bright the peaceful ray
That o'er the wife's fair features play;
And sweet the words of ripened love
With home-warm welcome interwove.

While mutual tender interests vie
In kind inquiry and reply,
The wife, in gentle accents, said,—
"Two baby lips beneath the spread
Assert their right and claim their meed."
And when, more favoring view to gain,
She turned aside the counterpane
That spread its pliant folds between,
A sleeping baby's face was seen.

Far in the heaven of happy dreams,
Of honey loves and milky streams,
The little spirit seemed to rove
And revel in remembered love;
While lips still moved in mimic draught
As though maternal sweets they quaffed.
And when the careful, tender tip
Was given from paternal lip,
The touch the sleeper's dreams beguiled,
And all the joyous features smiled.

Oh, blest the household gods that dwell
Where virtue holds her citadel!

And blest the hallowed joys that bloom
In earth's glad Eden, happy home!
If the wild tide that swells the breast,
When uncrowned fondness brings unrest,
Can yield such charm to passion's tale,
Can bind us with its witching spell,
Why should the calmly rippling flow,
Blessing the fields it wanders through,
Claim less the mind's admiring gaze,
Win less the minstrel's lauding lays!

But love itself cannot ensnare
The watchful eye of wifely care;
All Will Deloring's efforts were
As chains of frailest gossamer
To keep his Emma's searching gaze
From probing mind so ill at ease—
For what can walls secretive prove
Against the force of woman's love!
"Whence your sad thoughts, to-night?" she said,
"Have trials more than wonted preyed
Upon you in to-day's affairs
To fill you with disturbing cares?"

Unwilling truthless words to speak,
Nor willing yet the news to break
Of grave events so lately wrought
That loss, disaster, ruin brought,
While hesitating voice betrayed
His deep distress, he answer made,—
"Yes; trials have beset my way
In full, perplexing force to-day,
And still annoy; but let them not
Your peace disturb, home is the spot
Where outside cares should be forgot.
With courage I must face them; then
All will flow on in peace again."

"Think you," she said, "I'd happy be,
Or the slow night bring rest to me,
If, through its lingering hours, I knew
They were not bringing rest to you?
And can there be a grief of heart
You may not to your wife impart,
When years of trust have brought no care
To one, the other did not share?
It must be grief in strange degree
To lie beyond my sympathy.

There can no sorrow you betide
You may not with your wife divide."
Then on his arm her hand she laid,
And with persuasive utterance said,—
"Share me your griefs, your burden share,
Nor doubt a woman's power to bear."

Deloring's chiefest fears had flown
At her assuring words and tone.
He answered,—"Ever have I found
Your love in darkest hours abound.
For you I feared; but consequence
We'll leave to the same Providence
That ne'er has failed our trust to bless,
Or send us comfort in distress."

Without reserve he then confessed
The cares that on his bosom pressed,
The loss that stripped of worldly worth,
And crushed his spirit to the earth,
Binding it down with heavy chain
As though 'twould ne'er take wing again.

'Twas strange to see how soon his grief
In its recital found relief;
How, as he gave to words his pain,
Comfort and hope came back again;
And how the strengthened purpose grew,
And high resolve—to dare and do.

'Tis thus in all the battle strife
That wakes, but wastes, intensest life,
His is sad risk of fatal wound
Who fights alone when foes surround.
But they defend a double front
Who back to back abide the brunt;
Who wield and ward for mutual sake,
And mutual succor give and take.

And thus it is the selfish mind,
To generous impulse disinclined,
Can never know the joy that lies
In love-constrained self-sacrifice.
The love on others we bestow
Yields our own hearts their warmest glow,
As hearth returns requiting smile
When with free hand the logs we pile.

Part Second.

VERY POOR AND VERY RICH.

Beyond the sloping shore of sand
Where the brave steamer sought the land,
On a slight eminence was seen
The pleasant town of Ivygreen.
'Mid gardens bright and clustering trees
It wooed and won the southern breeze,
What time the southern breezes blew
And trees and gardens verdant grew,
Though now there only met the sight
The wide and wintry robe of white.

Amidst, the vane-crowned steeple stood
In supercilious altitude,
And plainer "Meeting House" of "Friends"
Neatness but no adornment lends.

There fairest mansions met the glance,
Abodes of wealth or competence;
And humbler homes of less display
Impress of comfort still convey;
But poverty had rarely shown
Its wan abode in this fair town.

Though boat and train—a double tie—
Made the near city nearer lie,
And brought with growing interchange
To rural thought a wider range,
The village had not yet outgrown
Its simple guise and rural tone,
Its quiet, quaint simplicity,—
As oft in growing towns we see,
When comes the boon and comes the ban
Of influence metropolitan.
Yet Taste was not a stranger there,
Nor Art an unknown guest or rare,
But Taste and Art alike were seen
In oft abodes at Ivygreen.

Among the forms the eye's survey
Might heed upon the quiet way

Was one whose noiseless, hasteless feet
Trod, day by day, the village street.
Without employ, without resource,
He carried neither scrip nor purse.
Averse to labor or to gain,
His only riches was his cane,—
The thing alone that claimed his care,
His sole companion everywhere.
Moving, at rest, awake, asleep,
It never left his fingers' keep.
A charm about it seemed to lie
Of worth so great, of price so high,
No gift could e'er that worth outweigh,
No proffered gold that price could pay.

When slowly pacing to and fro,
He gazed upon the ground below,
Though what the meditative spell,
Or what his thoughts were, none could tell.
A stranger child might shrink with fear
To see "Old John" approaching near;
But every child of Ivygreen
Knew well the ancient negro's mien,

That, though with aspect strange and weird,
His mind no harmful impulse stirred.

'Twas said that he a slave had been
Before he came to Ivygreen;
But that, with crazy mind, no skill
Had worked despotic "driver's" will;
That bonds and stripes had all been foiled
To make him toil as others toiled;
And that his "owner" little cared
Whither he went or how he fared,
And forwarded a scheme to have
This useless, idiotic slave,
This "chattel" of so little worth,
Escape to freedom in the north.
Whate'er the means, John freedom found,
And wandered indolently round
From place to place, from lot to lot,
Till fell the lines in this fair spot.

No local, fixed abode he knew,
Nor care domestic claimed its due.

For miles around he loved to roam,
Finding each kitchen fire a home;
Gaining, where'er his rovings led,
By day a meal, by night a bed,
In barn or in protecting shed;
And even the kitchen settle's screen
Was not denied, if nights were keen;
Nor human churl nor watchdog's ban
Disturbed the innocuous old man.
A self-invited guest he came,
And self-dismissed resigned his claim;
And everywhere he came and went,
Well known, well used, uncalled, unsent.

For all this hospitable heed
John never gave requiting meed.
Only in times of hurried haste,
When needs the laboring means surpassed,
Some thoughtless tongue might give command
To John to give a helping hand;
But John's most grateful moods would fail
To nerve his arm for fork or flail,

And sad, indeed, the look forlorn
With which the ebon face would turn,
The highway's freer scope to find
And leave the exacting roof behind.

While thus of food and shelter sure,
An humble guest at every door,
Of raiment ne'er was scarceness seen
For summer airs or winds more keen.
For there were those whose liberal store
Full well supplied the clothes he wore—
Though ever he sought, with notions queer,
To shape them into grotesque gear,
His independent form of thought
For Fashion's mandate caring nought;
And strangers oft their mirth betrayed
Noting the changes John had made.

Thus numerous guardians he could claim;
And one, a dear old Quaker dame,
Would oftentimes, when Old John came,
Discourse to him of solemn things,
His duty to the King of kings,

His mortal lot, the life above,
The wondrous depths of Jesus' love,
And urge the poor, benighted mind
A Saviour's sheltering love to find.

John listened with attentive ear
While fell the words of Christian cheer;
But most attention would bestow
When told how Jesus dwelt below,
Whose cradle was a stable bed,
And who, when earlier years had fled,
Though hungry multitudes he fed,
Yet had not where to lay his head;
Who taught how fairest lilies grew
Though neither art nor toil they knew;
How birds that neither sowed nor reaped
Were by the Heavenly Father kept;—
To these John close attention gave
With eyes more bright and face less grave.

The aged matron whose appeal
Bespoke her earnest Christian zeal,

And woke the mind of poor Old John
To gleam of thought and listful tone,
Though years had blanched her wavy hair,
And furrowed cheeks once strangely fair,
Though youthful fire and flush were gone,
Bloomed yet with graces all her own;
As bright Althea's flowery blaze
Yields beauty to autumnal days;
Or as the phosphorescent gleam
To gathering darkness lends its beam.

In mansion close by village stir
She dwelt untitled Dowager;
And all who lived afar or near,
Or rich or poor, or child or seer,
Whate'er their means, whate'er their aim,
In honor held Ann Morton's name.
'Twas here her sole surviving son
Wielded the wealth his sire had won;
And children's children gathered round
In paths of humble duty found.
In plain attire, in honest life,
In ways that made no league with strife,

In simple word of yea and nay,
They sought and found the peaceful way,
Illumined by the reverend one
Who, shining, knew not that she shone.

'Tis here our vagrant story leads:—
Old John,—supplied his utmost needs,
And in his strange, grotesque attire,
Was toasting by the kitchen fire,
Where viands choice, in generous deal,
Had smoked for David Morton's meal,
Who in the room adjoining sat
With circling friends, in dinner chat,
Around the amply furnished board
His opulence could well afford.

Nor was it idle gossip led
The easy, brisk discourse that sped
From mouth to mouth. Although they glance
At Will Deloring's late mischance,
In words of kind concern they spoke,
And much deplored the sudden stroke

That thus the blooming hopes had spoiled
Of one who honestly had toiled.

Though open door assistance lent,
John, at the first, gave no attent
To the discourse; his limbs were crossed,
And he in dozy thought was lost.
But as the story would unfold
Of heavy loss by burglars bold,
He turned his head, and plied his ear
The tale of startling deed to hear.
Never was seen that old man's face
Such wakened interest to express.
While listening to the facts detailed,
The crime achieved while darkness veiled,
The ruin to Deloring brought,
And chiefly when to feeling wrought
They hoped the villains would be caught,
His fingers tightened on his staff;
He seemed in restless mood to chafe;
Listened anew, and pondered o'er
The words that floated through the door;

Seemed wildly moved by what he heard,
Until at last by impulse stirred
He seized his hat, rose to his feet,
And passed out slowly to the street.

Meanwhile the table converse flowed,
And the clear truth too plainly showed
That Will Deloring had been brought
From thrift and comfort down to nought.
And every listener, old or young,
Felt his heart mounting to his tongue,
And each in lengthened phrase or brief
Outspoke his sympathetic grief—
Though younger friends, when age is nigh,
Ne'er let their words their thoughts outvie,
Well taught each impulse to restrain,
And modestly their part sustain.

David, whose promptings oft bore fruit
That honored the maternal root,
Spoke of the duty ever pressed
On "Friends" to help a "Friend" distressed,

And thought that others should not shun
This Christian duty to their own.

George Freeman there who bore a part
Had large estate and wealth of heart,
Yet wealth of words he ne'er possessed
Whate'er the worth of thought expressed;
But, like the gems that court display,
The rarer the more precious they.
With all attentive ear he heard
Each kindly, sympathetic word,
And every thought benevolent
Received his full but brief assent.

Ann, whose own views had been suppressed,
Now gave to words her heart's unrest:
"Friends," the benignant matron said,—
And all attentive audience paid,—
"If one of our society
Had met mischance in such degree,
Had thus been rudely tempest-tost,
His property, his all had lost,

Fraternal usages of Friends
Had led to prompt and helpful ends;
Had aimed to break the blow severe,
Had given the sufferer words of cheer,—
Words that would sympathy reveal,
Backed by substantial help as well.
And is our Christian love confined
To those of our religious mind?
We give our fullest meed of praise
To Will Deloring's honest ways;
Although he treads without our sphere,
His faith, I doubt not, is sincere,
And, as his moderate means command,
Shows generous heart and liberal hand.
We must not see our neighbor lie
Plundered and beaten, left to die,
Because he's of another clan,—
He Jew and we Samaritan."

She paused. No softest breath was heard,
Nor hand nor rustling dress was stirred,
But utter was the hush profound
That reigned that table group around.

'Twas age that spoke, 'twas age addressed
The generous impulse of each breast;
And Friends of youthful years or sage
Never withhold its meed from age.

Again she spoke:—"David, thy mind
Was ever tenderly inclined;
Thou and our guest, George Freeman, strive
This matter due regard to give.
Your hearts alike to good incline;
Your heads are both more clear than mine."

Then David spoke:—"Mother, thy heart
Has never failed its zeal to impart
To those who hear its pleading cries
For virtue when it bleeding lies;
Nor ever has there aught unblest
Come from obeying thy behest.
George and myself will conference hold,
Will each to each our views unfold,
And, if approved, thy wish fulfil."
George Freeman added,—"Ann, we will."

Part Third.

THE QUAKER MAIDEN.

Now speed the household to their ways;
We follow one whose face displays
The same benignant, gentle trace
That still adorns Ann Morton's face.
Could age the forms of youth resume
And faded charms take back their bloom,
Scarcely distinct might seem the two,
Ann Morton young and Susan Drew;—
The likeness was by blood instilled,
Susan was Ann's lost daughter's child;
The same soft hair, the same mild eyes,
The same entrancing witcheries
That shone and sparkled in the face,
And yet you knew not where to place.
'Twas like the bird of ruby vest
That seeks the honeysuckle's breast;

Restless it wanders o'er the bower
From cup to cup, from flower to flower;
Scarcely your gaze upon it fixed
In one bright spot, it seeks the next;
But where its mimic rainbow gleams
The while, a charming grace it seems.

But when the satin bonnet wound
Its circling shield the face around,
Like costly, clasping ring of gold
The gem's more sparkling sheen to hold,
The sweet accord entranced the view
Ravished with gem and setting too.

'Twas thus before her glass she turned
In unadorning dress adorned;
Taught rebel locks to do her will,
And smoothed her robes with strokes of skill;
Adjusted circling furs with care
To meet the needs in winter air;
And then a final, lingering look
Upon her mirror's face she took
As if to catch its favoring smile—
What though it were her own the while!

Nor dare we all too closely pry,
Nor dare a maiden's heart to spy,
To learn if in that bosom dwelt
One little thought, scarce seen or felt,
Had said, could it have told its tale,
"'Twill please the eye of Edward Vail"—
For pleasant walk o'er sparkling way
With Edward now before her lay,
And visit to a suffering friend
To pleasant means made kindly end.

It was a sunny winter's day
When sought the twain the trodden way;
All crisp beneath the foot-tread lay
The crackling snow; dazzling and white
It gleamed upon the maiden's sight,
Who o'er her face and bonnet drew
A veil,—to break the blinding view,
She said, and shield her from the daze,—
And yet, perchance, not glittering rays
But Edward Vail's too constant gaze,
Who lent his aid, although he drew
Small pleasure from obstructed view.

Yet free and joyous went the twain,
Merry and mirthful, maid and swain,—
For need not I too plainly say
That silken chains around them lay,
And keen observers' eyes had guessed
What her tied tongue had ne'er confessed,
Though he his tender suit had made
And all his warm affection plead.

But love is oft like brooks that seek
The greeting light from mountain peak;
O'er many a chiding rock they break
Before they reach the tranquil lake,
Or lose each foamy, murmuring trace
In the encircling tide's embrace.
And so the love in Edward's breast
Found nought but harrowing unrest,
Like ark-sent dove that sought in vain
Rest for her weary wing to gain,
Compelled from bootless search to come
Back to the flood-encircled home.

For Edward full allegiance lent
To bishop's power of long descent,

To churchly forms of prayer and praise,
And tuneful helps the heart to raise
From earthly to celestial gaze.
But Susan was of straitest sect,
Who deem they wedded life protect
By bonds within their pale alone,
And bravers of their law disown.

In this exclusive doctrine bred,
Susan felt dangers round her spread,
She knew not why, she saw not where,
But still, unquestioning, felt the fear.
And while within her troubled breast
A loud-voiced plea for Edward pressed,
It seemed all duty to transcend
To these loud pleadings to attend.
How could she e'er the sting endure
Or lasting peace of mind secure,
If she Friends' teachings should abjure!

But when that day, at David's board,
Ann Morton spoke, her every word

Pierced to the heart of Susan Drew,
Bringing strange vision to her view.
For though it touched her inmost life
With sorrow for Deloring's grief,
Who shall a simple maiden blame
If, while her tears responsive came
Watering her cheek for others' woes,
They watered, too, her withering rose?
Ann Morton, pleading love's high laws,
Unknowing pleaded Edward's cause,
And every word so sagely said
Its impress due on Susan made:
"And is our Christian love confined
To those of our religious mind?"
"Because he's of another clan,
He Jew, and we Samaritan?"
Oft she repeated in her mind
These words so liberal and kind;
And oft applied their welcome power
In freshening drops to withering flower.

Ah, Maiden! how alike are minds
When beckons Joy, when Passion blinds!

The aphorism's sententious truth
Applies to age, applies to youth :—
Whatever men desire were true,
That forms their swift conviction too.

Though stern midwinter held its sway,
The frigid air in stillness lay,
Like conquering giant well that knew
His brawny strength and vantage too,
And, smiling on his victims, chose
To show his power in bland repose.

So, wrapped about with vesture warm,
While nimble feet their part perform,
And sportive wit and sparkling thought
As each from each the infection caught
Beguiled the way,—or more subdued
The graver turn and serious mood,—
They held their road, and soon had come
To the Dalrymples' pleasant home,
The Pinery, as the place was named,
A rural title fitly framed

To note remains of ancient wood
That still in lofty grandeur stood,
Telling of long-past days their tale
In pensive song to every gale.
Above the quiet lawn's repose
In towering pride and strength they rose,
Bared their broad frontlets to the sky
The wrath of tempests to defy,
And seemed like constant, stalwart guard
That o'er the grounds kept watch and ward,
Shielding from prying travellers' view
The dwellers and the dwelling too.

Susan's and Edward's feet obey
The guidance of the opening way
Through bowers with piny fragrance fraught,
And reached the door their footsteps sought;
And soon beside a cheerful grate
Edward in patient waiting sat,
While Susan sought a room above,
To cheer with words and looks of love
One whom from suffering long endured
Wealth, love and care had not secured.

The pleasant room had charms, the while,
His waiting moments to beguile;
Its glowing walls the gaze invite
To panorama of delight;
Pictures no skilless pencils traced
Their claims present to eye of taste,
And graceful sculptured forms enrich
The aidful pedestal and niche.

Edward enchanted loitered round
And stores of high enjoyment found,
Wonted art's treasures to explore
With cunning eye of connoisseur.
Then, a piano's open board
Tempted his hand; he struck a chord
With gentlest touch; then roamed at ease
Over the mind-obedient keys.
With hand of practice, touch of skill
He woke their mysteries at will.
Then at his call a prelude rung,
And then in answering strain he sung,
Striving sonorous voice to curb
Lest other ear it might disturb.

SONG.

OH! LOVE IT IS A PLEASANT THING.

Oh! Love it is a pleasant thing,
  Though oft it makes us sigh;
Though to the heart it grief may bring,
  And tear-flood to the eye.
'Tis not in vain our tears may flow;
  'Tis not in vain we're moved;
'Tis worth a thousand griefs to know
  We love and are beloved.

The hoarse and angry winds, that sweep
  Across the broad blue main,
Ruffle the bosom of the deep
  And drive the falling rain;
Yet joy is in the bounding gale,—
  When o'er the seas I stray,
It fills my broad and bending sail
  And wafts me on my way.

Then would I not delight forego
Although with tears combined;
The griefs and tears I fain would know
That I the joys might find;
For love it is a pleasant thing;
And though it brings us pain,
A thousand thousand joys 'twill bring
To those who wear its chain.

Though soft and low that voice suppressed,
To his own ear alone addressed,
He sung with feeling unrestrained,
Deeming his voice no audience gained;
But what his wonder, glancing round,
When covert listener he found!
Stealthy her tread or dull his ear,
For Susan Drew was standing near.

"O sing again," she said, "my mind,
Though adverse taught, can pleasure find
In melody of mystic strings,—
And in thy voice what music rings!"

Could stronger potency impel!
Could Edward Vail resist the spell!
He touched the answering keys again;
Again he breathed melodious strain.

SONG.

ONE WHISPERING WORD.

Oh, when on your beauty I gaze with delight
And affection your image enthrones,
And my quivering lips all too feebly recite
What my heart in fond fealty owns,
You answer me not,—though I look in your eyes
That like heavenly witnesses shine,
And they smile to my smile as in gentle replies,
And awake the sweet thought—you are mine.

Why thus should your tongue the dear passion disown,
If your looks your fond feelings convey?
And why not in one gentle whisper make known
What your glances unbidden betray?

O speak to me, darling, the thoughts of your heart;
Let your eyes starry witnesses shine;
Speak, if but one whispering word, ere we part,
And confirm the sweet thought—you are mine.

He ceased;—the tender, pleading lay
In sounds symphonic died away.
No word was spoke, but one brief glance
Revealed his thoughts with eloquence,
And found in Susan's moistened eye
A mute but eloquent reply.
They turned,—a common thought obeyed,
And sought the way that homeward led.

Part Fourth.

DOUBTS AND ENCOURAGEMENTS.

'Twas New-Year Eve. The fading day
Shone in the pale west's latest ray,
And the last twilight's soothing cheer
Bore solace to the dying year,
While doom no respite e'er outflies
Was hastening from the orient skies.

The dark meridian of the night
From east to west pursued its flight,
Bringing successive night and morn—
An old year dead, a new year born.
Solemn and still the heavenly spheres
Witnessed the silent change of years.
Throughout their wide and glorious range
Move circling years in constant change;

Only in vast, mysterious scroll
Are writ these changes as they roll.

But o'er each darkened line of earth
Where dawned in turn the new year's birth,
It seemed of joy the carnival
As rolled the time-recording ball,
Bringing the watched-for midnight hour,
The silent signal, when from tower
Far sending forth their chiming swells
Should wake to joy cathedral bells;
When sudden chorals loud and long
Should burst from waiting mortals' song;
When mighty organs' grandest keys
Should spread upon the midnight breeze
Their volumed roll of harmonies;
When o'er the land from north to south
Thunders should pour from cannon's mouth,
And rattling drums and trumpets' bray
Should greet the new-born New-Year day.

As yet it was but evening gray,
Dying December's lingering ray,

But in the face of seer and child
Alike expectant pleasure smiled
As hope spread forth to each its toys,
Its lessening griefs, its growing joys,
Its pledge that kindlier destiny
Was in the coming year to be.

Through gathering darkness, far and near,
Impatient salvos tore the air,
Where clamorous youths' ambitious zeal
Startled the night with flash and peal,
Intent to drive, with noisy din,
The old year out, the new year in.

'Twas darkening night. Discordant strain
Had heralded the coming train.
Swept on his way the iron steed
As if no curbing hand 'twould heed;
Till tightening brakes and lessening speed
Brought it to stand, with mild demean,
The station near of Ivygreen,
And Will Deloring from the car
Emerged, returning from afar.

For when the heavy stroke befel
That seemed of all his hopes the knell,
He sat not down in grief to wear
The heavy garments of despair,
But far and near surveyed the field
For aught that might assistance yield.
Were there not those, when cares had pressed,
Who could his untied purse attest?
Men who misfortune's shocks outbraved
By his unfaltering succor saved?
And could he doubt their ready hand,
Now strong to help, he might command?

But gratitude too rarely finds
A resting-place in human minds.
We do not gain, whate'er our toil,
Fruiting from uncongenial soil;
And generous deeds can ne'er impart
Their generous zeal to sordid heart.
Nor does the honest show of need
With eloquence effective plead—
Alas the countless arts to hide
A pressing need until supplied!

Thus small encouragement, as yet,
Had Will Deloring's efforts met,
And he his homeward pathway pressed
With no less weight upon his breast.
The closing year no comfort lent
To coming days of dark portent,
And keen solicitudes combined,
In tightening strain, to crowd his mind.

But when with hastening steps he sped
Along the way that homeward led,
Though dark had grown the face of night
His welcoming windows shone with light.
For Emma's well-adjudging care,
Prescient of mien his mind might wear,
With wifely forethought sought to cleave
The spell persistent cares might weave;
And, that amid the gathering gloom
His house should yield warm welcome home,
And eve of opening year be bright
With glowing fire and lamps' full light,
She had no barriers interposed
By curtains drawn or shutters closed,

That so the glowing in-door rays
Might greet with cheer the comer's gaze.

Thus spite of cares and burdening thought
Was comfort to Deloring brought,
But not repose; the eve's repast
Had scarcely wrought its cheer and rest,
When message to Deloring came—
Old John an interview would claim.
Oft did this humble pensioner share
The kitchen fire's unstinted cheer,
But never had he made pretence
To seek the master's audience,
Contented with the rest and fare
To which he found a welcome there.
But when with kind excuse denied,
Firmly his strange request he plied,
Until at length his suit he gained.—
Then with clear mind and speech unchained
He told his agitating tale,
And not a thought forsook its trail.

"Master," he said, "I'll tell you where
The thieves that stole your money are.

Last week I to the city went,
And that night in the city spent.
On some old mats Aunt Liddy spread
In a small room, I made my bed.
I wakened some time in the night,
And heard a voice and saw a light.
Not from Aunt Liddy's room it came,
But, from the other side, a flame
Shone through a hole above my head,
And I could hear the words they said.
I could not understand it all
Because the hole was very small,
And low the voices to my ear,
So that I failed in part to hear,
But learned from what was plain to me,
And from what little I could see,
A bank the thieves had robbed that night.
Master, it set me all affright.
No more that whole long night I slept,
And quiet as I could I kept
Until I found it break of day;
And then I rose and came away.
I'll go with you, and show you where
The thieves that stole your money are."

Strange was the tale, and strange the mode
In which the doubtful story flowed
From mind so little thought had stirred,
And lips from which had ne'er been heard
Such volume of expressive word;
And Will Deloring well might fail
Credence to yield to John's detail.
But answers sound to questions plied
Cast every urgent doubt aside,
And showed a strange experience
Wrought in the old man's dormant sense.

With so slight aid from others' speech
But little news his ear could reach.
He nothing learned from rumor's tongue,
From floating news the crowd among;
And shut within himself had slept
The troubling secret that he kept.

But when the dinner talk, that day,
Revealed where fell the loss, a ray
Of sudden light, in strangest guise,
Broke on his clouded faculties.

Could this be reason's latent ray?
Had fear that night and love that day
Brought it to sudden, healthful play,
As the cold iron warms and glows
Beneath a strong arm's steady blows?
And had Ann Morton's pious heed
So given to growth the mustard seed,
That now it rose in stately pride
And spread its sheltering branches wide?
When thus to keenest interest wrought
At once he had Deloring sought,
And, when at home he found him not,
Had lingered round with bateless zeal
For earliest chance his tale to tell.

Strange as at first the seeming dream,
Deloring yielded to its claim,
Leaving the future to reveal
The truth or falsehood of the tale.
He warmly thanked the kind old man
For friendly act and thoughtful plan,
And to his offer made response—
That he would go with him at once,

To find the spot where he had heard
The sounds his fears so deeply stirred.

Familiar aphorismic lore
Has ofttimes from its copious store
Urged the disheartening adage home,—
"Misfortunes never single come."
But more devoutly may the thought
Before the humble mind be brought,—
That trial on trial, here below,
The Father's chastening love may show;
And, conversely, with equal haste
Blessing on blessing follow fast.
We may not scrutinize the road
By which God's guidance leads to God;
We only need his hand to hold,—
The tortuous path will all unfold.
When Will Deloring had dismissed
His sable friend and humble guest,
While he to Emma should unveil
The startling news of Old John's tale,
And how he hoped success to gain,
If the old negro's thoughts were sane,—

A carriage stopped before the gate,
Within whose dark enclosure sat
Two men in Quaker garb arrayed,
Whom when the in-door light displayed,
Their forms and faces well were known,—
One David was, George Freeman one.

The Friends their salutations made
In words no compliments that paid,
But with the manner frank and free
Practised by their society.
There was no rudeness of intent,
If in no bow their bodies bent;
No indecorum was betrayed,
If hats remained their brows to shade;
The host and hostess did not see
Offence or incivility,
When, as they welcome gave each guest,
They were by Christian names addressed.
For Friends would strive to guard their ways
From worldly pomp and vain displays
Honestly, strictly, to abstain
From courtier's arts, profuse and vain,
Another's weak esteem to gain;

And, in whate'er they say or do,
To be consistent, plain, and true.

Brief social converse interposed,
And then the Friends their aim disclosed:
They gave Deloring sympathy
For trials sent thus suddenly;
They told him how the mother's heart
Had in his troubles borne its part;
And then her friendly wish obeyed
By offers of more helpful aid
Pressing emergencies to meet,
Until more favoring times should greet
His likely labors, having trust
Their hopes and his would not be lost.
They told him that the offer made
Was only meant as friendly aid,
And that no thought of theirs was blent
With grasping bonus or per cent.;
That he no surety need procure
To make repayment more secure,—
His own acknowledgment should be
The sole required security.

'Twas David spoke the joint design;
George only said,—"His words are mine."

If John's revealings filled his breast
With clamorous gratitude's unrest,
Still more their friendly words that flowed,
And trust expressed, and help bestowed,
Help unforeseen, unsought, supplied,
Help free from patronizing pride;
In all,—the kindly thoughts that move,
What could they be but Christian love!
With gushing force his feelings swept,
And manly Will Deloring wept.
But brief the inordinate display,
And manhood soon regained its sway.
Pleading his mind's continued strain
For feelings he could not contain,
He turned to nobler thoughts that burned,
And thanks for neighbor love returned.
Told Old John's tale, and his resolve
Its truth or doubt at once to solve.

The Friends would then no longer stay
To waste Deloring's time away,

But, urging him his fears to quell,
Shook friendly hands and bade farewell.
Their rumbling wheels along the ground
In dying distance soon resound,
And Will and John their efforts strain
To catch the next convenient train.

But not until the tinkling call
The household gathered, one and all,
Around the altar ever reared
Where God is known and loved and feared;
And John was called from kitchen chair,
To seek the common Father's care
In joyful praise and humble prayer.

The holy book before him spread,
Deloring first devoutly read
A psalm of deep submissive trust,
Humbling the human heart to dust,
And seeking Him the worlds that made,
The promised strength, the promised aid.
Then Emma's touch accordance rung,
And voices joined in sacred song.

HYMN.

SHADE AND SUNSHINE.

When sunny skies above us spread,
And smiles the charming day;
When fragrant every floral bed
That decks our shining way;
Thy helping presence, Lord, we need
Lest joy our hearts betray.

When life is but a vale of tears,
And vanishes the light;
When in our sky no star appears
To cheer the lengthening night;
Thy help we need to calm our fears,
Or put those fears to flight.

In shade or sunshine, night or day,
Be ever, ever, nigh;
We would thy warning call obey
And to thy presence fly;
Would tread with care the narrow way
And on thy help rely.

Hushed were the voices, hushed the keys;
Died out the answering harmonies;
And, kneeling all in reverent mood,
Deloring's voice went up to God.
He bowed beneath bereaving stroke,
Yet thanks for mercies left he spoke;
For human loving-kindness shown
Poured out his heart before the Throne;
Prayed for each one whose friendly thought
Relief from gravest care had brought;
Blessings besought in earnest tone
(He named the humble name) on John,—
That rising sun's restoring ray
Might drive each lingering mist away,
And twilight turn to fullest day.
For plotting foes petition made,—
That God's great power might be displayed
In guiding wandering souls that stray
To see the dangers of their way,
And wisdom's warning voice obey.
Then leaving all in God's own care,
In safety here, in danger there,
The future with its mysteries,
Its hopes and its uncertainties,

He gave to Him whose eye beheld
The future from profoundest eld.

Solemn each heart while thus he prayed;
And when devout Amen was said,
From Old John's choking voice again
Sounded the pleading word "Amen!"

Part Fifth.

THE OLD FACTORY.

At far-stretched city's utmost bound,
By tottering fabrics compassed round,
Beyond the dusky lamplight's glare,
'Mid filth to impregn the midday air
When spring should bring dissolving rain
And seething heats their power regain,
Stood a frame building, quaint and tall,
Rising above a basement wall.

A factory once the place had been;
But years had lapsed since had been seen
Beneath its roof thrift's proud domain,
Or aught but struggling misery's strain
From day to day to hold the life
Wasting in vice and want and strife.

Save that at times the abject poor,
Honest perchance, might find a floor
Where, for small guerdon, to bestow
Their few worn chattels' meagre show,
And where, at darkening hour, to come
From poor-paid toil and call it home.
Or save where sick and homeless wretch
Might seek his failing limbs to stretch,
Breathe to mute walls his rattling groan,
And die, unheard, unhelped, alone.
Ah! hard the lot of low degree
That falls to virtuous penury,
When, in the exigence of want,
It finds abode in misery's haunt;
Like victim to foul carcass tied,
Helpless his chain-bonds to divide;
Or like the wounded bird that crawls
To readiest shelter where it falls,
Finding—not safety's solitude,
But poisonous reptile's hissing brood.

The building all in darkness lay,
For deepest midnight held its sway;

Only the struggling stars gave light
Through scudding clouds, that deep midnight,
Or grimy snow-heaps scattered lay
Shedding faint phosphorescent ray.
One only window shed a beam;
'Twas where expiring embers gleam
From out the ashes' drear embrace,
As eyes' last look from ashen face.

Flickered in room at topmost height
This scarcely seen, inconstant light,
Yet watched without by subtile eyes
As fitfully it gleams and dies.
With dingy walls and dust and mud,
And floor bestrewed with scattered wood,
With stifling, stale, narcotic fume,
And gouts of salivary spume,
The room a wretched aspect bore.
On tumbled beds upon the floor
Three men were lounging, while the fire
Was left to flicker and expire.

Two restless seemed, and roundly swore
They'd keep that cursed hold no more;

The third restrained their fire and wrath
With equal vehemence of oath.
Cursing their too impatient mood
Their restless temper he subdued;
Said that no law's suspicious cur
Would ever seek them where they were;
Boldly defied the rigorous search
Of eyes to find their lofty perch;
Wagered his soul's eternal rest,
That if they ventured from their nest—
Listen! a noise was on the stair
And in the passage to their lair;
Now near approached their high retreat.
Start the scared burglars to their feet
And scan their bolts with eyes discreet.

The latch in vain the intruders try,
Their gentle knocks bring no reply,
And words of gentleness were vain
Entrance or answer to obtain.
Then to solicitations bland
Succeed the tones of stern command,
And threats, that if the long delay
Were still prolonged, to force the way.

The argument of words was vain,
And that of ruder force began.
Blows followed blows; but well-nailed oak
Defied the too-restricted stroke,
For narrow was the passage way,
And low the stooping ceiling lay.
Vainly the short-swung hammers swept,
Hinge, bolt and plank position kept.

But those who came at midnight hour,
Armed with the law's compulsive power,
Were not without the means at hand
To force as well as to command.
Came levers' pry with stout arms' strength—
And bolt and plank must yield at length
To forces joined.—Came wildest din
When, quickly opening from within,
The burglars fiercest onset sprung,
And blows were given and pistols rung,
With clamorous shouts of deadly fray,
And twofold strength of men at bay
Striving 'gainst odds to force their way.

Sharp was the contest,—but 'twas brief,—
For well-aimed bullet struck their chief,
Who wounded fell at first assault,
And others' courage was at fault;
The law's supporters onward pressed,
And all resistance soon had ceased.
One with severe, disabling wound
Lying upon the floor was found,
And hand and foot they all were bound.

The contest o'er, they turn their eyes
To flames that from the hearth arise,
And find the bright, rekindling fire
Catching and blazing, higher and higher,
With papers hurriedly thrown
The few remaining coals upon,—
For tell-tale papers turned to smoke
Ne'er yet the solemn silence broke,—
But all too late to gain their end
Was this destructive measure planned,
In dissipating air to hide
The witnesses to laws defied.
For part alone to ruin went;
Some by the heated air's ascent

Were borne aloft and scattered round
Over adjoining roofs and ground;
Some charred and half consumed were found;
While some the stifled flames outbraved,
And in uninjured state were saved.

And now, when tumult no more stirred
The midnight air, a groan was heard
That from the passage floated in,
Unheard amid the strife and din.
Cautious they went; and searching round,
A prostrate, bleeding form they found.
They bore it to the light. The groan
Was from the lips of poor Old John;
As close behind them he had pressed,
A burglar's ball had found his breast.
Dying he seemed, but soon revived,
And showed them where Aunt Liddy lived;
But such her tremor and affright,
She scarce would ope her door that night,
Till, all her fears at length relieved,
The helpless sufferer she received;

And the detectives bore, apace,
Their fettered prisoners from the place.

While thus wild contest woke the night
At the old factory's dingy height,
Deloring waited the return
Of the detective force, to learn
Whether John's tale were sane and true—
Which only the event would show.
When now he learned the rogues were caught;
That one—their leader—had been shot;
Of all safe lodged in prison cell;
Of what the stolen bonds befell;
And of the poor, old negro found
Bleeding to death with bullet wound;
Wildly his struggling thoughts obey
His joy's and grief's commingled play;
And, yielding to the impulse high
Which heart and duty both supply,
He sought the scene of recent strife,
Anxious to save the old man's life.

'Twas dark within the dingy room,
Although the morning dawn had come,

When Will Deloring reached the spot
And stood beside Aunt Liddy's cot,
On which the wounded negro lay
Whose life was ebbing fast away.
His eyes were closed, and on his breath
Rattled the sullen sound of death.
The surgeon said that help were vain;
To touch the wound were but to pain,
To break the slender vital chain.

At length Deloring called his name,
His eyes unclosed, his senses came,
He moved his lips,—but scarce was heard.
Deloring stooped to catch the word.
"Master," he whispered, "all is right;—
Without, it's dark,—within, it's light.—
Jesus—was born—in—stable—bed."—
A groan—a gasp—Old John was dead.

Deloring mourned the humble friend
That thus so sadly met his end;
And in church-yard at Ivygreen
A small white gravestone may be seen,

With few brief words its face upon
To tell its tale,—HERE LIES OLD JOHN.

Deloring but in part regained
The loss by burglars' wiles sustained;
But by his good friends' timely aid
He plied with diligence his trade,
And in due time the loan was paid.
He never failed in grateful meed
To friends so friendly in his need;
But David Morton e'er would say,—
"It was my mother led the way,
Thine was the thriving industry."
And George would add,—"He speaks for me."

We hasten to our story's end:
We saw two lovers slowly wend
Their silent way, who vainly strove
Against the tide of mutual love.
We seize the glass that gives our eyes
A view of human destinies.
We see unfold a joyous scene
As e'er beheld at Ivygreen.

We see amidst her maidens stand
Our Susan Drew; and hand in hand
She's joined with one of noble mien
As e'er by fondest eyes was seen.
The gentle claimant claims his own
To love's ennobling bondage won;
The willing captive yields her hand
To golden circlet's typic band;
In mutual chains the twain are bound,
And Edward's dove its leaf has found.

OTHER PIECES.

Religious Meditations.

NOON BEYOND.

The gloom of night is hovering nigh,
The pauseless noontide westward flows,
Gray vapors fill the earth and sky,
And fading twilight fainter grows.

The forest outline fades away
And fails upon the straining sight,
And clouds that smiled upon the day
Grow black upon the skies of night.

Yet ever shines meridian sun:
Beyond the twilight of the West,
Beyond the evening's gathering dun,
Beyond the skies in sable drest;

Beyond the sunset's dying glow,
The farewell of the young, pale moon,
The sorrowing night-wind's requiem low,
Beyond, beyond, there still is noon.

Its splendor fading never knows
Though shadowy the encircling night,
And sombre wall more plainly shows
The golden gateway of the light.

Grow gray, ye mists! grow dark, ye skies!
Grow black, impending night profound!
Beyond, meridian splendor lies;
'Tis ever, ever, noon beyond.

THE WINDS.

The winds that ever round me roll,
And loud or low their strains prolong,
Wake varied passion in my soul,
And wake my voice to varied song.

When gaily move the dancing leaves,
And tall trees bow with graceful nod;
When greets the gale the answering waves,
And speeds each sea-bound sail abroad;

Then swells my heart with cheerful thought;
Then swells my voice with cheerful praise;
Then life with richest joys is fraught,
And faith its highest hopes conveys.

When sleeps the breeze, and to the eye
The wakeful aspen moves alone;
When mirrored waters moveless lie
In azure bowls of depth unknown;

Then tenderest thoughts my mind employ;
In still small voice my praises flow;
Then sweetly live my hope and joy,
With heaven above and heaven below.

And when tempestuous winds arise,
And storms their scourging powers unchain;
When low the vaunting oak tree lies,
And writhing ocean roars with pain;

Oh! then with loftiest thoughts I thrill;
With boldest voice my songs arise;
For God is in the tempest still,
And Heaven's beyond the stormy skies.

So let the winds around me roll,
And loud or low prolong their lays;
My deepest passion they control,
And wake my voice to songs of praise.

ENDLESS AND BOUNDLESS.

What joys doth mortal life embrace,
Though bounded all by time and space,
When blest by God's uplifting grace!

Yet to far loftier joys we soar
That wait us on the blissful shore
When time and space shall be no more.

When spotless, sinless, sorrowless,
We shall in bliss our souls possess,
Dwelling in Heavenly Love's caress.

When the soul's high felicity,
From limit, end and fading free,
Shall boundless, endless rapture be.

Great God, Thy constant grace bestow!
Make every living fibre glow,
While yet we linger here below;

That when Thy voice shall call us hence,
We shall but wake from slumbering sense
To joys more lasting and intense.

Oh the blest thought! that we shall be
From sin's offending presence free,
In endless, boundless bliss with Thee!

THE PRESENT.

Is there a Present? Does the narrow line
That separates the future from the past,
That fills no space, that words can ne'er define,
The flash of quick perceptive mind outlast?

Does the fleet phantom an existence own,
When our most eager grasp it still eludes?
Which, ere it can to hastening thought be known,
The boundary of the swelling past includes?

We stand between the future and the past;
We gaze upon the distant drawing nigh;
But ere our conscious sense can be impressed
The flitting scene forever has passed by.

There swells a coming joy within our breast,—
It is a memory ere that joy we clasp;
The brooding Future warms it in her nest,
The dragon waits his new-born prey to grasp.

The rippling wave that greets our onward prow
  Joins with the boiling wake that foams behind;
And such the measureless and pauseless Now,
  That mocks the hold of the deluded mind.

Call it not Instant, for it stayeth not,
  But call it Moment, for it ever moves;
Call it a touch that finds no tactile spot,
  Yet bears away our nascent joys and loves.

It is but Memory, that with fairy wand
  Waves back the hastening moments in their flight,
Binds them together in its mystic bond,
  And charms our blindness into conscious sight.

Oh blessed gift! that holds to human view
  That which would pass forever from its ken;
That makes the cheating present seem so true,
  And dying moments live for us again;

That makes the transient joy abiding bliss,
  The breadthless line a spreading space to be,
The winged rapture linger with its kiss,
  And the fleet phantom stand our scrutiny.

God holds the folded future in his hands,
Deals out successive moments to the light,
Shows us their measure in the dropping sands,
And spreads the seeming Present to our sight.

THE TOWER.

Two outlooks has my tower high:
  One opens near the earth,
Where glimpses only of the sky
And of the landscape greet the eye,
  But give to longings birth.

The other, from a lofty height,
  Spreads to the charmèd eyes
A landscape stretching to the sight;
And broader scenes send back the light
  Of broader, brighter skies.

Below, shut in by sombre rocks
  And forests towering high,
'Tis all a prison wall, that locks
The narrow, mazy space, and mocks
  The search of eager eye.

But, from above, my eyes can look
  Through all the winding ways
Leading along by vocal brook,
By sunny green and cozy nook,
  That seemed but darkened maze.

And far beyond, the windings lead,
  Till eye no more can trace,
To where earth's ampler beauties spread,
And scenes to scenes remote succeed
  Till earth and heaven embrace.

When earthly needs and duties steal
  My mind to cares below,
Yet do my loftier thoughts impel
My hastening steps, again to dwell
  Where scenes so charming glow.

My God, that tower is Thy grace,
  That lifts me from within
The gloomy shadows that embrace
The narrow, sordid dwelling-place
  Of earthly sense and sin.

And from that tower-height I gaze
  Beyond the gloomy wall,
And view the many pleasant ways
Threading through all the seeming maze
  That holds the soul in thrall.

The joys serene, the bliss intense,
That loftier faith can know,
Are all unknown to human sense
Till lifted from the shadows dense
That darken all below.

I gaze and gaze—until no more
To finite sense is given;
It cannot round the curving shore
Where mortal sight its search gives o'er
And earth is lost in Heaven.

TO BE AND TO DO.

THINE to be and Thine to do,
Glorious Sovereign, make me thine;
All I am with thee imbue,
All I do with thee combine.
Let each throb my pulse that moves
Be a throb of life divine;
Let each act my will approves
Show that will conformed to thine.

While I feel this feeble life
Trembling through its mortal lot,
While I wage unequal strife
With the foes that falter not,
In thy living bundle bound
May that life be hid with Thee;
With thy pledge of victory crowned
May that strife a conquest be.

Living, dying, let thy love
My unfailing life-blood be;
Living, dying, let me prove
My unfailing love for Thee;
In thy life my life renew;
In thy strength redouble mine;
Thine to be and Thine to do,
Glorious Sovereign, make me thine.

THEN FACE TO FACE.

I FAIN would joy in things below,
For God's almighty power they show,
And blessings numberless bestow
That o'er the thorniest pathway grow.

The revelations of His love,
Even in our trials interwove,
His tender, ceaseless care but prove,
And all my grateful passions move.

But oh! what joy my spirit wings,
When from its earthly couch it springs,
And, like the lark, it soars and sings,
And gazes on celestial things!

And brighter still shall be the scene,
When no dark glass shall intervene,
Nor wilful thought, nor thought unclean,
My ravished soul and God between;

But when beyond earth's weary race
I shall repose in his embrace,
And, gazing on him face to face,
Forever praise Redeeming Grace.

MIDWINTER DAY.

Hope to desponding man comes near
With truth from lore proverbial drawn,
And whispers in his grateful ear,—
In words of comfort, tones of cheer,—
"The darkest hour precedes the dawn."

And so, when tempests rule the year,
The wild midwinter day I prize;
It speaks of vernal changes near,
Of quickening life o'er Nature's bier,
Of longer days and sunnier skies.

I hail the day! The fiercest blast
And wildest surges may prevail;
But we discern the shore at last,
We know the deepest depth is past,
And Hope is singing in the gale.

With voice and heart I hail the day!
'Tis like prophetic storm-born bow
That shines athwart our deluged way
Amid persistent lightnings' play
And lingering thunders muttering low;

And speaks of storms that pass away,
Of thriving Nature's teeming wealth,
Of torrents stretching to the sea,
Of life that springs from out decay,
And winds that bear us joy and health.

So, when midwinter storms prevail
And icy vapors cloud the breath,
I scent the summer in the gale,
And wild Midwinter day I hail,—
For Life is conqueror of Death.

NOTHING TO DO BUT TO GO.

A WANDERER I've been, and have travelled for years
By the stage-coach, the steamboat, the train;
I have known joyful meetings, have shed parting tears,
With friends I might ne'er meet again.
And I've learned—let my farewells be joyous or sad—
No haste or distraction to show,
But with baggage pre-checked, and with passage pre-paid,
To have nothing to do but to go.

The loiterer, when over the iron-clad track
The train is heard coming apace,
For his ticket will clamor, and urge for his check,
In a whirl of impatient distress;
While others, more timeful, with undisturbed mien,
Will composedly pace to and fro,
Or, quietly seated, will wait for the train
With nothing to do but to go.

Oh! thus — I have thought — when we're called to
depart
For the land whence we never return,
May we feel we are fully prepared for the start
When the death-sounding note we discern.
With our ticket secured, and our cares all at rest,
No disquieting thoughts may we know,
But tranquilly waiting be found at the last,
With nothing to do but to go.

THE LIGHT WITHIN.

"The fool hath said in his heart, There is no God."

I'm lost in high and wondering awe
When, to my mental fastness fleeing,
I to my secret cell withdraw,
And gaze upon my conscious being.

Mysterious "I!" Mysterious "Am!"
And thought mysterious in me dwelling!
I know that through this sensate frame
The fount of conscious life is swelling.

No proof I ask, no proof I need,
My knowledge—to no proof I owe it;
The conscious witness speaks with speed
In words of power,—"*I feel it, know it.*"

I ope the windows of my cell,
My outward sense my call attending
Seeks out the place where others dwell,
And with their thoughts my thoughts are blending.

Mysterious contact! Mind with mind
In mutual recognition meeting!
Each consciousness complete, defined,
And each its conscious fellow greeting!

I know those minds commune with mine;
I ask, I need, no proof to show it;
I can no lucid cause assign
Of how, or why,—I only *know* it.

I give my spirit sense the wing;
It soars to realms of Boundless Being;
Reveals of creature life the Spring,
Of glorious purpose the decreeing.

I feel the impress of a Mind—
A Life from ever to forever,
That, leaving captious thoughts behind,
Outwings the "nothing" and the "never."

A Will supreme beyond my thought;
A Presence far beyond extension;
Goodness with boundless blessing fraught;
Knowledge beyond my comprehension.

Not in the dark all nature dwells,
'Tis only dark to blind debater;
Unheeded chance the mind repels,
But grasps—Omnipotent Creator.

No proof of this I ask or need
Of weaker reason's poor devising,
My inward sense conveys with speed
Conviction solemn, all-sufficing.

O Mind of infinite attribute,
My creature spirit bows before Thee;
Not mine with folly to dispute,
But mine to know Thee and adore Thee.

Trust in God.

"WHAT IS THAT TO THEE?"

When I am called to die,
To yield my spirit to His sacred keeping,
To rest my body in the long, long sleeping,
I fain would not belie
My trust in Him who doeth all things well,
Whose will alone my every wish should quell.

I would not vainly choose
What road shall lead me up the holy mountain,
What path conduct me to the crystal fountain;
Nor willing be to lose
The guidance of the hand that e'er has led
In ways I knew not, but with mercies spread.

If gentle be the call,
If faint and feeble be the distant warning,
Like dimmest daystreak of the early morning,
Tipping the pine trees tall,
And brighter growing till the red east shines
With fullest glory on the glowing pines,

How grateful should I feel!
That I might still behold my loved ones longer,
Might tarry till my timid faith grew stronger,
Might linger to reveal
The loves that buoyant life can ne'er unveil.
Like odors evening only can exhale.

If sudden be the stroke,
If all unheralded His solemn coming,
Like flash, fast followed by the thunder's booming,
That scathes the skyward oak,
While pale with fear we hold our bated breath
In awe of the swift messenger of death,

How blest the favored lot!
A lot to few departing spirits given—
Painless to pass from earth and sin to Heaven.
Oh! surely it were not

Departure we should dread, at once to rise
On whirlwind pinions to the opening skies.

So I repose my trust;
And, whether speedy messenger obeying,
Or waiting patiently my Lord's delaying
To summon me to rest,
On His dear love my willing trust would dwell;
He knoweth best; He doeth all things well.

THE BOW IN THE CLOUD.

The storm that rose upon the vale
And lashed the summer breeze to gale,
When westering noon had sped,
Its torrents to the earth had poured,
And thunders that in wrath had roared
In sullen mutterings fled.

And lo! athwart the clouded east,
Spanning the heavens in darkness drest,
A sevenfold glory shines;
Pursuing rays of sunset light
O'ertake the rain-drops in their flight,
And pierce their lingering lines.

And, with its bright, prismatic zone
Binding the heavens and earth in one,
The arch of triumph bends;
While every charm that human eye
In light-born beauty can descry,
Its tinted lustre lends.

That arch triumphant cheers the heart;
It bids pervading clouds depart
And prostrate hopes to rise:
God's time-long covenant with man,
Betokened in yon glorious span,
Is printed on the skies.

Thou crowning wonder of the storm!
While man beholds thy circling form
The deluged earth above,
Not all the storms the earth that shake
Shall thwart the end benign, or break
God's Covenant of Love.

"THE EVENING AND THE MORNING."

"Shall we receive good at the hand of God, and shall we not receive evil?"

THY word, O God, brought forth the light;
The radiant day, the sombre night,
Both came at thy command;
The morning's glow, the evening's chill,
In turn obeyed supremest will
And spread o'er sea and land.

And not alone the sunny ray
That wakes the morn and cheers the day
Reveals thy glorious ways;
Day unto day, and night to night,
In solemn voice proclaim thy might
And speak thy wondrous praise.

Oh! thus, when shadows gather round
And fill my heart with griefs profound,
And all my hopes are shorn,

The same great power, I would believe,
Spreads o'er my world its darkest eve,
That lights its fairest morn.

And eve and morn alike shall find
My willing spirit e'er inclined
To bow before thy throne,
Thankful, when brightness cheers my hour,
Trustful, when gloomy shadows lower,
Thy sovereign love to own.

O yield thy help, my God, my King,
My feeble faith in strength to bring
Thy goodness to survey;
Let darkness hail the coming light,
And eve and joyful morn unite
To form my perfect "Day."

"NOT MY WILL."

LORD, what am I that I should strive
For peace and rest below,
A life of joy and ease to live,
Nor pains nor toils to know?

To choose my lot, to guide my way,
To task my toils, be Thine;
To do my part from day to day
With humble trust be mine.

More than the meat that can supply
Exhausted nature's claim,
More than the tastes that charm the eye,
Is life's devoutest aim:

To hear Thy voice, to do Thy will,
Be these my joy and feast,
With cheerful patience toiling still,
Till pains and toils have ceased.

I would not choose my earthly lot,
Nor with earth's perils toy;
I would not be where Thou art not,
And where Thou art is joy.

Unseeing I the way would tread
In silence by Thy side,
In solemn stillness bow my head
Whate'er my life betide.

MAJESTY AND MERCY.

O God, in majesty august
Thou sittest on thy throne,
Supremely great, supremely just,
The glorious, holy One;
We bow our heads unto the dust
Thy majesty to own.

Let not our feeble thoughts pretend
Thy deeper thoughts to scan;
Our days and years in vain we spend
To search thy mighty plan;
Thou didst behold the glorious end
Ere days and years began.

From Thee our daily life proceeds;
The moments come from thee;
And every moment as it speeds
Obeys thy sole decree,
And thy creative mandate needs
Ere moment it can be.

To Thee no mystery appears,
Nor small nor great is known;
Thou countest all the glittering spheres
That gem the starry zone,
Yet tiniest speck thy notice shares
As though beheld alone.

And us, but atoms in thy view,
Thy tender notice cheers;
Thou mak'st thy blessings ever new,
And numberest all our tears;
And when to hope we bid adieu
Thy saving love appears.

Still prostrate at thy feet we bow,
But lift our eyes above;
We feel thy loftiest presence now,
Yet all our fears remove,
For in the crown that girts thy brow
The costliest gem is Love.

THE GOLD-GIRT CLOUD.

"Mine eye affecteth mine heart."

How oft my heart grows faint,
And gloomy doubts and faithless fears come o'er me,
Viewing the human woes that lie before me,
The sombre hues that paint
The panorama of our shadowy life,
Its sin, its misery, its toil, its strife!

Oh! sin and woe and death!
Where'er we turn, in sable guise they meet us;
Where'er we list, in solemn tone they greet us;
Even with our first drawn breath
Comes the wild wail, touching, historic, brief,
The record and the harbinger of grief.

And on through manhood's prime
Come days and years of suffering and of sorrow,
Of doubt and dread, that see no bright to-morrow
In all the promises of earth and time;

No rock of refuge from the burning sun,
No couch of comfort when the day is done.

And ever, ever, on,
Till bends the form beneath the lightest burden;
Till sorrow is of toil the only guerdon;
Or, ere that goal be won,
Comes shock the highest as the humblest knows,
The pitcher broken where the fountain flows.

Thus faithless I complain,
Fainting beneath my heavy load of anguish;
Letting my faith in God's great purpose languish,
As though His word were vain;
Thus weakly murmur at His sovereign will,
Mindless that Infinite Wisdom ruleth still.

Oh, let my doubts subside!
In God's own time withdrawn shall be the curtain,
In God's own way the doubtful be made certain;
'Tis not for me to chide
His long delaying, nor in grief to pine;
His heart is far more pitiful than mine.

But I my part must bear
In His blest mission to the lost and lowly,
Speaking His words, striving with purpose holy
Their griefs to seek and share;
Bearing His yoke, doing His high behest,
Calling earth's weary ones to heavenly rest.

Oh for the helpful grace
To view with solemn faith whate'er befalleth;
To labor meekly where His purpose calleth;
All trustingly to trace
A Father's voice in Sinai's thunders loud,
A Father's smile in Sinai's darkest cloud!

HUMBLE ASSURANCE.

To know that Thou lovest me!—Lord, can it be
That though so unworthy, so prone to the dust,
To Thy bosom of tenderness I, too, may flee,
And bury my fears and repose all my trust?
May a creature so sinful, so faithless as I,
So resisting my heart, so unyielding my will,
Unto Thy loving arms in full confidence fly,
And know that Thou lovest me—lovest me still?

To know that Thou lovest me!—yes, to believe
That the Saviour of sinners has knocked at my door;
That Thy voice has commanded the dead to revive,
And bade the poor mourner to sorrow no more!
So firmly to trust Thee though fainting I lie;
Though blessings are hid, and though every ill
Seems darkening around, to believe Thee still nigh,
And know that Thou lovest me—lovest me still!

To know that Thou lovest me!—Praised be that love
That falls like the dew 'mid the shadows of night,
That glows like the sun from the heaven above,
That clothes like the snow in a mantle of white!
Yes, praised be that love that, so full and so free,
The largest desire of my heart it can fill;
So lowly descending it makes even me
To know that Thou lovest me—lovest me still!

To know that thou lovest me!—Savior divine,
Let that love so unbounded shed gladness and peace;
Round all my heart's warmest affections entwine,
And glowing and growing forever increase!
Let me breathe its sweet perfume with every breath;
Let its dews o'er the shades of my evening distil;
In the perils of life, in the travails of death,
Let me know that Thou lovest me—lovest me still!

THE SHINING CROSS.*

When in the thickening war of life
Eager, exulting hosts assail,
And 'mid the toils of battle-strife
I feel my strength and courage fail,
I lift my eyes to Heaven, and there,
Brighter than cloudless sun, I see
A shining cross and words of cheer:
"By this shalt thou a conqueror be."

Foe after foe comes surging on;
United they my strength defy;
My waning cause seems almost gone,
And wounded oft I prostrate lie.
But oft as to the skies I glance
The same blest signal there I see;
Its words have power o'er spear and lance:
"By this shalt thou a conqueror be."

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* He [the Emperor Constantine] said that about midday, when the sun was beginning to decline, he saw with his own eyes the trophy of a cross of light in the heavens, above the sun, and bearing the inscription, "Conquer by this."—*Eusebius.*

Oh! when the last great foe appears,
And wounded unto death I seem,
When rise the foe's insulting cheers,
And pours abroad life's wasting stream;
Even then my glazing eyes shall ope
And still the heavenly vision see;
Its words shall still give strength and hope:
"By this shalt thou a conqueror be."

THE BLESSED ENDING.

Our cup, how oft it overflows
With bitterness and grief;
How long and numerous seem our woes,
Our joys how few and brief.
But would we faith's great lesson learn,
Let this our thoughts employ: —
The bitter shall to sweetness turn,
The grief shall end in joy.

If God's great purposes demand
That we should serve in tears,
Shall we His sovereign will withstand,
And pine away our years?
Far better that we meekly bow
To ills that now annoy;
In His appointed time we know
That grief shall end in joy.

Oh! life is not a wasted field,
  Though furrows wide and deep
Destroy its surface, if the yield
  With gladness angels reap.
And happy he who bares his breast
  When furrowing ills destroy;
He knows that toil shall end in rest,
  And grief shall end in joy.

"NOTHING WAVERING."

I.

When oft the cares and toils of life
Tax every nerve and every thought,
When toil to only toil gives birth
And care alone from care is wrought,
My spirit, trustful, ceases not
On Wisdom infinite to rest,
Though Nature weakly chides its lot,
Forgetful that He knoweth best.

II.

In swift obedience to my call
Come back the far-receding years,
And smiles of sunshine o'er them fall,
Or smiles are drowned in storms of tears.
But whether memory brings me cheer,
Or whether memory brings me pain,
I know His ruling hand was there,
I know my every grief was gain.

III.

An ocean, where the billows chase
The billows in unceasing strife,
Reveals the life I still must face,
And change that brings unchanging life.
The ocean curves beyond my gaze;
It meets the vaster curving dome;
There's land beyond that blending maze,
And rest, and peace, and bliss, and home.

IV.

So when earth's many toils and cares
Tax every thought and every nerve,
My trust in Him my spirit bears
To grasp the scenes beyond the curve.
And o'er the present, o'er the past,
And onward to the vast untried,
My faith its gaze serene shall cast
And trust Him still whate'er betide.

THE SUN-FLOWER.

As turns the sun-flower's golden face
  Where'er the sun's warm beams invite,
So turn thy gaze, O child of grace,
  To seek His face and see His light.

If skies grow dark and hide his beams,
  Shroud not thy face in gloom and sorrow;
Even the cloud with mercies teems,
  And sweeter light shall glow to-morrow.

Fraternal and Humane.

THE BLIND MATCH-VENDER.

I passed along the crowded way
Where thousand footsteps, day by day,
    Impressed their wonted tread;
Where, strangers each to other's eye,
The eager crowd went hurrying by,
    Each by his purpose sped.

The heart of joy, the heart of care,
Of greed, of grace, commingled there,
    Yet each was there alone;
What though the pleading face of grief
Wordless might tell its story brief,
    Its grief was still its own.

And as I mused upon the scene,
And watched the varied face and mien
Of those who hastened by,
I heard a voice, so faint and low,
That listening you might scarcely know
Whence came that feeble cry.

I looked. A form of ebon dye,
Save that with purest snow might vie
The curling locks he bore,
Stood with his back against a wall—
A blind old man of figure tall,
But held erect no more.

And ever and anon his cry
Besought the heed of passers-by
To humble wares displayed;
But yet so feeble was the song,
That none of all that hurrying throng
A moment's heed betrayed.

Struck by the sable matchman's mien,
I paused to note the touching scene

That filled my heart with pain;
My pity owned his gentle plea,
And much I mourned the poverty
That made that pity vain.

At length a gentle form drew nigh,
With wonted pity in her eye,
Practised in kindly deed;
She saw the figure gaunt and tall
That leaned against the garden wall,
She heard the cry of need.

And ignorant of gazer's eye,
Mindless of crowd that jostled by,
She paused before his stand,—
Sought for her purse with instinct true,
The price of largest parcel drew,
And placed it in his hand.

And when that shrivelled hand conveyed
To hers the purchase she had made,

Nor tongue forgot its thanks,
Quickly she forward leaned, replaced
The purchased goods with noiseless haste,
And joined the moving ranks.

If pitying pain had rent my heart,
To note the old man's fruitless art
An honest meed to gain,
Faster my throbbing pulses came,
Viewing a scene that well might claim
Recording angel's pen.

For kindly purpose there I traced,
When she the purchased goods replaced
So softly on the stand—
The purpose of a generous mind,
That he an honest pride might find,
Nor feel the pauper's brand.

Oh! if more blest the hand that gives
Than that which worldly boon receives,

Then blest indeed are they
Who, honoring Nature's diadem,
Tear not from penury its gem
Of self-respect away.

In vain do we the hand outstretch
To raise to life a dying wretch,
If yet his manhood dies;
But well the sufferer's needs to scan,
And make him feel himself a man,
Brings blessings from the skies.

THE SACRED BOND.

In meditative mood I gaze
  Beyond the äerial sphere that bounds me
To spheres remote, where starry rays
  Fill the vast azure that surrounds me,

And yield my faith,—that each bright orb
  Through space unfathomable rolling
Is drawn to each, with mystic curb
  One sphere each other sphere controlling.

I cast around my searching eye:
  Throughout all Nature's realm it findeth
One grand, one universal tie,—
  Matter all other matter bindeth.

How near soever or remote,
  What form soever it possesses,
Howe'er concealed, howe'er minute,
  Atom each atom's power confesses.

And so doth spirit, spirit draw;
Adjacent or far severed straying,
They heed the universal law,
Impulse reciprocal obeying.

As atom on each atom acts
In mutual influence entwining,
As orb each other orb attracts
In one grand circling whole combining,

So mind to mind, and soul to soul,
Hath tie no creature will may sever,
Whether in orbits near they roll
Or seek remotest distance ever.

And He who loves the humblest soul
That e'er his holy Image beareth—
His far affection draws the whole;
His beams each wandering atom shareth.

Oh! could unclouded sight reveal
The truth to which our pride so blinds us,
Our quickened love might make us feel
The bond that to our brother binds us.

MY BROTHER.

"This commandment have we from him, that he who loveth God love his brother also."

Dweller in station low,
Whether the stream beneath thy pulses beating
And that beneath my own claim kindred greeting,
Or whether in us flow
Dissevered currents that at distance glide
And only mingle in a far-off tide,

Fraternal tie I claim:
I claim thee, as a common life-blood sharing;
I claim thee, as a common Image bearing;
Whate'er thy tribe or name,
My brother thou, though severing paths we tread,
As widening rays from common centre spread.

I care not that the brand
Be set on thee of weary, restless toiling;
Of aspect mean from penury's despoiling;

That thy extended hand
Be rough and flinty in its uncouth clasp—
It is my brother's, and that hand I grasp.

I care not if thy voice
Be raised in prayer the Infinite One addressing,
Or words of naught to senseless gods expressing;
Or whether taught thy choice
To list devoutly the muezzin's call,
Or vainly to deny the All-in-all,

Thou hast a human soul:
Thou bearest still His image in thy being;
Art still regarded by the great All-Seeing;
To the same solemn goal
Thy feet and mine in speedy motion stride;
In life's great struggle strive we side by side.

Beareth thy face the glow
Of light from Presence holy, Love supernal,
From high communion and from hopes eternal;
Or gathers on thy brow

The scowl of passions vile, of dark intent,
The gloom of soul on fiendish purpose bent,

Brothers no less we are:
Bloodwashed, thou art to me a sacred treasure;
Bloodstained, thou needest love in greatest measure
To seek thee wandering far;
The nine and ninety all were left behind
When the kind Shepherd would the lost one find.

Brother of low degree,
I may not pause too narrowly divining
Thy inmost heart, or cause on cause assigning
Of grief and sin in thee;
But I may seek, in all fraternal love,
The veil of sin and sorrow to remove.

And my full faith may soar
Afar to see of that blest day the shining,
When war and wail, oppressing and repining,
Shall fill the earth no more;
When all the hills shall shout with gladsome voice,
And all the valleys with the hills rejoice.

Father of infinite grace,
Loving thy sinful ones with love parental,
Guide my far footsteps, as by star-beams gentle,
Thy Image still to trace ;
Help me my duty in thy fear to scan,
To see my brother in my fellow-man.

LOVE'S SURGERY.

The drooping boughs of great elm trees
A rural seat o'erhung,
And merry brooklet's melodies
Filled the sweet air with song.

And there a youthful mother whiled
A summer hour away,
While, on the flowery sward, her child
Could freely stroll and play.

'Mid buttercups and daisy disks
Around the field he ran,
And bold essays and courted risks
Proclaimed the budding man.

Until, at length, by some mischance
Too slight for muse to tell,—
Some childish want of vigilance,—
He tripped his foot and fell.

Oh! then arose impassioned cries
That drowned the brooklet's brawl;
And ready tears o'erflowed his eyes,
Obedient to the call.

The surgeon-mother soon arrived
To soothe the fancied pain;
His wounds her healing kiss received,
And all was well again.

Again in youthful wealth of life
Revelled the happy boy,
Forgetful of the recent grief,
And lost in present joy.

Ah! not alone in infant years
Do fretful fancies reign,
And find a source of woes and tears
Where scarce may be a pain;

And wounds, for which we vainly try
Trained surgeon's skill to prove,
May quickly heal, if we apply
The surgery of love.

INSTINCTIVE FRATERNITY.

"Every one members one of another."

HAVE you ne'er felt, when slumber's hand
Has in its mazy meshes bound you,
And drawn you to the dreamy land
Where fancies wild and weird surround you,

That in the instincts of the mind,
Slowly but surely on you creeping,
Conviction steals—faint or defined—
That some eye gazes on you sleeping?

It matters not how softly came
The friend or foe that on you gazes;
You feel it, know it, all the same,
And start from out your dreamy mazes.

Fled in a moment is your sleep;
Quickly your eye the intruder's catches;
And looks of fear or favor leap
From him that wakes to him that watches.

Whence the impression that betrays
The gazing presence to you dreaming?
And what mysterious power conveys
To inward mind the outward seeming?

Explain it as you can or will,
As spirit force or force magnetic,
It is no less a mystery still—
A sense instinctive, sympathetic.

It is no spirit-caller's cheat,
Nor whim that morbid mind discloses;
On what no reason may admit
A keener consciousness reposes.

Reject not, wondrous though it be,
This sense that stands with stern defiance;
The ear to hear, the eye to see,
Are they less mysteries to science?

But trace the nobler sympathies
From soul to human soul extending,
Where love to fellow love replies,
Echo with answering echo blending.

To this our loftier consciousness
In pleading terms its witness beareth;
To this the Word Divine no less
In voice imperative declareth,—

That each shall seek another's good;
That each, fraternal tie discerning,
Shall send a brother's love abroad,
And find a brother's love returning.

THE SKYLIGHT.

Shut in from morn's saluting rays,
And from the sunset's farewell gaze,
Its only sunlight noontide blaze,

The lofty attic stood aloof
From human kindness or reproof,
Which rarely sought that sloping roof.

The cheery sparrow's twittering note
Or song from bluebird's mellow throat
From the surrounding eaves would float;

Nor would the captivating strain
Seek the lone woman's ear in vain,
Who sat beneath the skylight's pane.

She was the sole inhabitant,
A child of grief and toil and want
Who there long earned a pittance scant.

Her toiling needle knew no rest
Till long the sun had left the west,
And feeble lamp had shone its best.

Her constant toils but bread could earn,
And oft with shame her heart would burn
To find herself her sole concern.

But flowering hopes had yielded naught,
While sickness many a pain had wrought,
And age its feebleness had brought.

She keenly felt her lonely lot,
But patient, trustful, murmured not;
God's promises were ne'er forgot.

Oft would she upward cast her eyes
To sunlit or to starry skies,
Or heavens in dark and gloomy guise.

Seen through the skylight, to her eye
The placid heavens seemed ever nigh,
Nor stars at distance vast to lie.

And gazing, gazing, day by day,
She thought the heavenly shining way
But very little farther lay.

So long that skylight, day and night,
Revealed its glories to her sight,
They grew to be her chief delight;

And in her simple, childlike faith,
She thought her latest dying breath
Would waft her spirit there at death.

Incessant longings filled her breast
To soar unto that heavenly rest,
And be forever with the blest.

Ofttimes beneath her roof-framed light
She knelt to seek, in mood contrite,
Help from the Helper infinite;

Help for the weary limbs and mind,
Help her impatient will to bind,
And in her Saviour comfort find.

And comfort came—when comes it not
To palace or to humblest cot,
When in God's hands we yield our lot?

"God's ways are good," her thought would be,
"'Tis only toil awhile for me,
And then, oh then, comes liberty!

"Beyond the clouds, beyond the sun,
Beyond the brilliant starry zone,
I shall find rest, and toil be done."

'Twas years, long years, that saw her wait
Submissive to her low estate,
A patient knocker at the gate.

And when at last the time drew nigh,
She sought beneath the glass to lie,
And gazing on the heavens to die.

They missed her from the accustomed ways;
They sought her in the old dwelling's maze;
They found her 'neath the skylight's rays.

A peaceful smile illumed her face;
Her lifeless features shone with grace
That left of parting pangs no trace.

On heaven had she fixed her eyes,
And passed from longings, toils and sighs,
From fading to unfading skies.

THE CAPTIVE AND THE BIRD.

YEAR after lingering year a captive lay
In dungeon deep, where scarce an arrowy ray
Sped from the azure bow could entrance find,
To pierce the darkness of the eye or mind.
For circling close around the window lone
Rose high the outer walls of rough, dark stone,
So high and dark, they cheered not, as it fell,
The feeble ray that sought the captive's cell
Freighted with kindly comfort from above,
A heaven-sent messenger of light and love;
But, like dishonest almoner, whose hold
Retains for selfish use the master's gold,
The greedy walls drank in the precious light,
And left the lonely heart in gloom and night.

And thus the victim of ambitious ends,
Shut off from comfort, and the love of friends,
And commonest bounties from His hands that fall
Who sends His sun and rain alike to all,

Long years had pined, until each earthly hope
Died from his breast; as flowers on sandy slope,
Beneath unclouded sun and dewless stars,
Yield up their moisture to the thirsty airs
And shrink and die, so, helpless, hopeless, pined
His dying body and despairing mind.

But one bright day—for even unto him
There yet was change from faintest, feeblest gleam
To gleam less faint and feeble, as the sun
Slanted his rays or shone at steeper noon—
On one such day, the startled captive heard
The unaccustomed sound of warbling bird,
That, perched upon the wall, in joyous strain
Poured floods of music through the grated pane.
It filled with strangest gladness all the cell;
The captive's stagnant pulse renewed its swell;
And, from his clouded eyes, in torrents rained
The watery tribute from a hope regained.

And day by day that warbler's music, fraught
With sweet companionship, its blessing wrought.

Each morn the captive sought the dungeon pane
To listen to the wild-bird's welcome strain,
And clutched and stretched toward the grated light,
And strained to raise him to the window's height,
Striving, if haply thus his toils might tend,
To bring him nearer to the unseen friend
Whose helpful mission yielded such delight—
The benefactor hidden from the sight.

Night after night the captive sought his rest
With brighter hope-fires kindled in his breast,
And dreamed of long-lost hours with dear ones spent,
With loving voices and with music blent.
Far distant echoes of the past, but clear,
Came floating to the listening dreamer's ear,
Seeming experiences of long ago,
And yet a joyous present seeming too.
Blest phantoms of the silent night, that seem
More like prophetic vision than a dream!
That, seek as may we to dispel their power,
Hold us in bondage to life's latest hour!

"O bird of blessed omen!"—high and loud
The captive's voice uprose one day, when flowed

A richer, sweeter strain of gushing song
That nearer yet its melodies outrung,—
"O bird of blessed omen! it is you
Has taught my deadened hopes to bud anew.
'Tis not a chance your tuneful note is given;
Your voice prophetic speaks of fetters riven.
The favoring day is dawning on my sight
That gives me back to liberty and light.
Soon shall my eyes in undreamed vision see
The home I long for, and I shall be free."

His wild cry ceased,—and ceased the warbler's strain;
Frightened it flew, and never came again.
The captive listened daily, daily bare
The burden of renewed, increased despair;
Until one night a friend in need drew near,
And whispered softly in the dreamer's ear:
He dreamed of friends and home, of loved ones nigh,
Of wild-bird's singing and of cloudless sky.
Slowly the song assumed seraphic tone;
The growing light with brighter radiance shone;

From glory unto glory, high, serene,
The views dissolving changed to rapturous scene,
And shining multitudes bestowed the hand
Of welcome to the sinless, tearless land.—
The Friend in need the captive's bonds had broke;
To dungeon darkness never more he woke.

Young Persons As Chief Actors.

FRIENDS IN NEED.

Within an humble cottage yard
  There grew a slender tree,
That stretched its kindly arms to guard
  A seat, where children three
Would often gather at their play,
And laugh and sport the hours away.

And on the upright, solid stem,
  Just where the branches sprung,
Sheltered beneath a leafy limb,
  A tiny house was hung;
And, nailed securely to the wood,
It thus from year to year had stood.

And in that tiny tenement
A tinier brood was reared; —
'Twas said the self-same tenants went,
By custom time-revered,
And dwelt beneath the fragile eaves
Thus sheltered by the shady leaves.

The trustful birds no danger feared
From Nelly, Kate or Will;
For well these children had been reared
Their duties to fulfil,
And leave unharmed the flitting pair
All trustingly sojourning there.

So in and out, from early dawn
Till evening shadows fell,
With worms collected from the lawn,
Or larva from its cell,
The busy parent birds would fly
Their hungry offspring to supply.

But when, one afternoon, the breeze
Was changed to ruder blow,
And rough winds shook the pliant trees,
And boughs waved to and fro,—

The feet the rotted floor expel,
And floor and nest and nestlings fell.

Oh, what a screaming cry of fright
  Comes from the parent birds!
And birdling throats their griefs recite
  As plainly as by words;
But, though affrighted, jarred and tost,
No limb was broke, no life was lost.

The unlucky chance the children saw,
  And hasted to the scene,
Where, prompted by love's kindly law,
  The scattered birds they glean:
And Will, who was the oldest, said,—
"We'll make a new floor for their bed."

Nor was the kindly purpose vain;
  But, though the hands untaught
Labored the object to attain,
  And all in earnest sought
To do the very best they could,
And save the hapless, fallen brood,

Yet older fingers helped to store
The nest again in place,
To fasten in the newer floor
With stronger nail and brace; —
And then the cry of grief was done,
And as before events went on.

And thus it was these children three,
With pious precept blessed,
Thought only how of use to be
In helping the distressed; —
But so, in doing what they ought,
They found their own enjoyment wrought.

CLING CLOSE TO ME.

Two children o'er a dangerous stream
Would make their way, and childlike seem
In venturous mood to be.
The one ten summers scarce has known,
Yet stout and strong his limbs have grown;
But weak and small the younger one
That bears him company.

The stream is rapid, dark and deep,
O'er which the adventurous children creep,
So cautious, yet so brave;
A narrow plank the banks unite,
Spanning the stream with bridge so slight,
That small mis-step of either might
Plunge both into the wave.

Yet Archie feels but little fear
While brother Robert is so near

To strengthen and to guide;
And closely clinging, as he must,
With grasping hands but childlike trust,
To Robert's person more robust,
He seeks the farther side.

And thus with trust dismissing fear
He hears the elder brother's cheer,—
"Brother, cling close to me!"
And clinging thus, and yielding still
His every effort, act and will
His brother's counsels to fulfil,
He finds security.

Oh! thus may I, through dangers led,
Seeking the narrow way to tread,
Find strength and guidance too;
Clinging to Him who ever near
Bids me dismiss my faithless fear,
Whose cheering promises I hear
My confidence to woo.

And when I cross the swelling tide
And feel Him near, my Brother Guide,
May this my comfort be,—
To hear the voice I love so well
Cheering above the waters' swell,
My lingering terrors to dispel,
"Brother, cling close to me."

THE LOW-BUILT NEST.

Last April, near my cottage door,
In a low branch of Juniper,
Scarce hid from passing gaze,
A pair of summer songsters made
Their little nest, in which were laid
Four speckled eggs; and there essayed
Their tiny brood to raise.

I said it was a silly thing,
With power of flight and strength of wing,
To build their nest so low;
And much I feared that soon or late,
So near the ground, so near the gate,
The unfledged young would meet their fate,
Seized by some prowling foe.

My little girl of ten would oft
Peep through the foliage green and soft,

And watch the growing brood;
And merrily would ofttimes tell
Of noisy twitter, and the swell
Of cavernous throats, expanded well
To take the expected food.

But one sad day, with frantic cries,
And heart distressed, and streaming eyes,
There came my little maid;—
The birds were to be found no more,
And scattered plumage streaked with gore,
And marks that feline traces bore,
Too well the end betrayed.

I soothed the simple, sorrowing child,
Urged her to calm her grief so wild,
And pressed her form to mine;
I told her how each living thing
That creeps below, or soars on wing,
In all its joy and suffering
Fulfilled His high design.

And then I fain a moral drew,—
I said,—"My dearest child, if you
Would shun the spoiler's eye,
Fix not your brooding hopes below,
Where griefs and disappointments grow,
Where murderers prowl and thieves break through,
But build your nest on high."

THE NAME IN THE SAND.

Some children, wandering on the shore,
Fearless amid the ocean's roar,
Sat down to read and rest;
And one, with skilled and steady hand,
Where waves retreating from the land
Had left the wide-spread slope of sand,
Her name adroitly traced.

Then laughed aloud with hearty glee,
And danced with merry feet, to see
The words engraved so well;
And thought that when the tide should rise
Her name would meet the wondering eyes
Of startled nymphs, in various guise,
Beneath the waves that dwell.

For, with a child's inventive thought,
Her teeming fancies wildly wrought

The peopling of the wave;
And so she thought,—how pleased they'd be,
Those sportive fish-nymphs wild and free,
To read her name beneath the sea,—
Which in full length she gave.

The rising tide came booming on,
And her companions, one by one,
Retreated from the sea;
But she, with beating heart and brave,
Still watched the ever gaining wave,
As her slow, lingering steps 'twould lave,
And turn again and flee.

At length with gathering might it came,
Swept with full force across the name,
Then back to ocean flowed;
And when the foam had cleared away,
Before her eyes the sand-floor lay,
But not one lettered trace to say
Where late the full name showed.

Then, slowly as the child forsook
The sandy sea-beach, and betook
Herself to homeward way,
A solemn voice her ear would win,—
Whether from out the wild waves' din,
Or still small voice that spoke within,
I leave for you to say;—

For holy thoughts were oft instilled
Into the bosom of the child
From sacred lessons given;—
The voice said,—"Daughter, may your name
Be graven on the Saviour's palm,
The Living tablet of the Lamb,
Which *angels* read in *heaven*."

THE PRATTLER GUIDE.

"*Children's children are the crown of old men.*"

LEAN on my arm, Dear Grandpapa,
You're old and weak and blind;
Your feeble steps too weary grow,
And tax your weary mind;
Along the rugged path there lie
Dangers that you could ne'er descry,
But you may on my care rely
The safer way to find;—
Lean on my arm, Dear Grandpapa,
You're old and weak and blind.

I'll not forget, Dear Grandpapa,
The love you've shown for me;
How oft I've slept upon your lap
And trotted on your knee;

How oft I've heard your charming tales
Of wanderings through the hills and vales,
Of tossing ships and dangerous gales
And perils of the sea;—
Lean on my arm, Dear Grandpapa,
Your faithful guide I'll be.

Your love for me, Dear Grandpapa,
Grows not the less with years,
For sorrows oft your heart has known,
And streamed your eyes with tears,
O'er dear ones you have laid beneath
The grassy canopy of death,
In snow-white shroud and fragrant wreath,—
As well your memory bears;
So lean on me, Dear Grandpapa,
And love shall quell your fears.

Now, here's the bridge, Dear Grandpapa,
That spans the mountain stream;
Keep close to me, and do not let
My aid too childish seem;

Keep close and closer to my side,
We'll safely cross this fissure wide,
Through which the murmuring waters glide,
And sparkle in the gleam
Of crimson clouds, Dear Grandpapa,
Reflecting sunset beam.

There,—now we've crossed, Dear Grandpapa,
And here's our pleasant cot,
Where peace and love alone shall rule
And strife shall enter not.
So, as my hand my heart obeys,
May I, to guide your feeble ways
Through the brief remnant of your days,
This hand and heart devote,—
To lead you, Dearest Grandpapa,
And cheer your lonely lot.

And One there is, Dear Grandpapa,—
You've known Him long and well,
Who loves you more than I can love,
And more than tongue can tell;

And when you cross the waters drear,
His strong right arm will still be near
Your tottering, struggling steps to cheer,
  And all your fears to quell,—
To guide you home, Dear Grandpapa,
  In joy, for aye, to dwell.

MY MOTHER.

When I was a little fellow,
Often, on my mother's breast,
Would I find a welcome pillow
Where my head could softly rest.

Often, when my little troubles
Would my childish bosom rend,
When of baby life the bubbles
Broke, and naught of joy remained,

Would I seek that fount of gladness,
Welling from exhaustless deep,
That could drive away my sadness,
And my troubles soothe to sleep.

Often, too, with joy abounding,
Would I climb upon her knees,
That I might, with arms surrounding,
Seek my mother's sympathies;

For, in gladness as in sorrow,
Finds the trusting, loving heart,
That it shall more gladness borrow
When its joy it shall impart.

Many an hour, her hopes revealing,
Would she teach me how to live,
Lessons in my heart instilling
Such as Christian mothers give;

Telling me of love and duty
That I owed to Him who died;
Of that Saviour's love and beauty,
Of that Saviour glorified.

When the busy day was closing,
All my weary powers oppressed,
In her loving arms reposing
Would I seek my wonted rest;

Finding in her simple singing,
In her soothing lullabies,
Sweetest music, quickly bringing
Sweetest slumber to my eyes.

Childhood's griefs and childhood's pleasures
Have departed long ago,
And my mother's mellow measures
Long have ceased my sleep to woo;

But her form, her love, her teaching,
Live in keenest memory yet;
May I be a long time reaching
Where my mother I'd forget.

HAPPY JENNIE.

"It is more blessed to give than to receive."

Busy hands and busy feet,
Smiling face and sparkling eyes!—
Duty, here, and pleasure meet,—
Pleasure in that duty lies.

Busy fingers weave a sock
Brilliant with its scarlet dyes;
Busy feet the cradle rock
Where the baby brother lies.

Busy feet and busy hands, —
Jennie's mind is busy too:—
While her labors she commands
Happy thoughts her fancies woo.

Stitch to stitch and round to round,
By and by the socks are done,
And the patient labor crowned,
And the looked-for pleasure won.

What's that pleasure, think you, now,
Can the patient child so win
That her hands more busy grow,
That her feet fresh toil begin?

What the hope her toils beguiles
With such pleasantness and power
That in all her face it smiles,
Sweetening all the present hour?

'Tis, that, when the socks complete,
With their closings tight and trim,
Grace yon little sleeper's feet,—
Pleasure it will give—*to him.*

Of herself, no thoughts abide,—
'Tis alone—"How glad he'll be
When upon his feet they're tied,
And he kicks with baby glee!"

Happy—O thrice happy child!
Early to attain to this,—
That you are to bliss beguiled
When you seek another's bliss.

MISCELLANEOUS.

TEMPERANCE SONG.

WE'VE LEFT THEM ALL BEHIND US.

In myriad forms temptations rise,
  In every guise they woo us,
They flaunt their sweets before our eyes,
  And lure us to undo us.
They vainly lure, they vainly plead,
  Their spells no longer bind us,
For by His help whose help we need
  We've left them all behind us.

They tempt us in the foaming cup,
  In sparkling glass they bubble,
They fill the bowl's expansion up
  The social joy to double;

But slavery is their sole reward,
And chains no more shall bind us,
For by His help to freedom stirred,
We've left them all behind us.

O brothers! let us join the hand
And vow upon the altar;
With solemn pledge we take our stand,
And never must we falter.
Not ours the poor inebriate's grave,
Not theirs the power to bind us,
For by His help whose help we crave
We've left them all behind us.

THE OLD-TIME WATCHMAN.

In days long past,—the olden time,—
In quietness our fathers slept;
And little feared was midnight crime,
Though few the watchmen guard that kept.
Truncheon in hand its comfort lent,
A rattle in his belt was borne,
When forth to chant the hour he went,
Or tell the tidings of the morn.

The midnight was a solemn hour
To urchins schooled in ghostly lore,
And when the threatening clouds would lower,
And stars would lend their light no more,
'Twas then we heard the watchman's cry,
So wild, unearthly and forlorn,
Bear witness to portentous sky,—
"Past twelve o'clock and a cloudy morn!"

And when the surcharged clouds would pour
Their teeming contents to the ground,
Our constant guardian ne'er forbore
Promptly to tread his wonted round;
Dripping and drenched his steps to ply;
In faithfulness to watch and warn;
But plaintive rose his midnight cry,—
"Past twelve o'clock and a rainy morn!"

Yet oft the skies serenely smiled,
And stars would wake, and winds would sleep,
And summer's tranquil joys beguiled
The watchman on his midnight keep;
Then would his cheerful voice resound
Like sweetest tones of mellowest horn,
Proclaiming to the world around,—
"Past twelve o'clock and a starlight morn!"

So, when the moon's recurring light
Poured o'er the world exuberant ray,
And Chanticleer awoke the night
With vain salutes of fancied day,

Then, when the midnight chimes were tolled,
The cheery chant, of pleasure born,
Around the stilly air was rolled,—
"Past twelve o'clock and a moonlight morn!"

Those days are gone,—that olden time,—
In quietness our fathers sleep,
And they who watched the midnight chime
Beside them lie in slumbers deep;
Yet still in darkest hours I hear—
Of screaming train or fancy born—
The watchman's cry resounding clear
To tell the tidings of the morn.

HOUSTONIA CERULEA.

"In grassy fields and meadows, from early spring till autumn."—BARTON.

DEAR flower of lowly mien, thy bed
Is not upon the mountain's brow,
Where cedars rise with lofty head,
Scorning the humble vales below;

But down beside the meadow streams
Thou lov'st thy sky-blue leaves to spread,
Where morning's warmest welcome beams,
And evening's fullest tears are shed.

The warbling sparrow, oft, her nest
Will hide among thy tufts of blue;
The meadow lark will bathe her breast
Amid thy humid foliage, too;

And many a bird of plumage gay,
At the near brook or tiny lake,
Will brush thy petals, on its way
Its feet to lave, its thirst to slake.

There, sweetly, in thy lowly bed,
From early spring till summer's close,
While many a gaudy flower lies dead,
Thy clustering gems their charms disclose.

Or o'er thee bend the sunny skies,
Or darkened arch above thee lowers,
Still smiling there thine azure eyes,
Thy modest, cerule tufts of flowers.

When from the city strifes I flee
My palsied pulses to revive,
I find my sweetest rest with thee,
And in thy bower again I live.

Even when darkening eve invades—
Deepest and darkest in the vale—
I'd rather seek thy humble shades
Than on the lofty mountain dwell;

For well I know that there is light
From stars amid the far-off blue,
Unseen from glare of mountain height,
But seen and blest from lowlier view.

OPENING OF THE SIXTH SEAL.

And the sixth seal was opened,—and behold!
The earth was shaken to its deepest cell;
And mountains, that through circling years untold
Had stood the rage of time and tempest, fell;
And flames and lava gushed from where they'd
stood,
And wrapped the groaning earth in fiery flood.

And lo! the sun on high no longer blazed,
But stood in black and rayless darkness there;
And the fair moon was stricken, too, and gazed
Upon the heaving earth with bloody glare.
Star after star forsook its place on high,
And wildly, swiftly, swept the troubled sky.

The heavens, that had held their high control
Since darkness first was parted from the light,
Were rolled together as a mighty scroll;
And, as the swift-winged eagle takes his flight,
So they departed; and the boiling wave
Below gaped wide with many a yawning grave.

And fear was on each living soul:—the kings,
The rich men and the valiant ones of earth,
The wise, with all that human wisdom brings,
The great men, bondmen, freemen, cursed their birth,
And hid them from the terrifying sight
In mountain dens and caverns deep in night.

And overwhelmed with terror and despair,
With eyeballs starting from their bloodshot beds,
They called upon the tottering masses there
To fall in crushing ruin on their heads,
Their guilty spirits from His face to hide—
Whose day of vengeance who shall e'er abide!

THE MOTHER'S LEGACY.

THE mother took her little boy,
Her only hope of earthly joy
And of her earthly care;
She told him of that Holy One
Whose searching eye no thought could shun,
Who knew whatever he had done,
And heard the feeblest prayer.

She told him of the Saviour's love,
Who left the glorious world above,
And bore the cross and died;
That 'twas to save our souls from death
He drank the unmingled cup of wrath;
For us he gave his willing breath;
For us was crucified.

And then the mother's hands were laid
Upon his head; and oh! she prayed
That God would be his friend,

And keep him with a father's care
From folly's way, from folly's snare,
From bold or secret sins, that bear
The wicked to their end.

But should temptations e'er beguile
His steps from wisdom's path the while,
And sinful passions grow;
That still her blessing might be there;
And deep in memory he might bear
His mother's words, his mother's prayer,
When her own head were low.

The scene has changed. Far years have rolled
Their onward waves between—behold,
The boy is changed to man!
And tempted now by pleasure's path,
Wealth's golden lure, ambition's breath,
Down the dread steeps of sin and death
That reckless mortal ran.

And far through many a clime he went,
And many a weary hour he spent,
To gain the world's poor gear;

But wheresoe'er his footsteps led,
His mother's arms were round him spread,
His mother's hands were on his head,
Her blessing reached his ear.

In vain the unholy crowd he sought,
And maddening pleasures dearly bought,
And paths of folly trod;
In every pleasure, every sin,
In midnight's silence, daylight's din,
That still small voice was heard, to win
The wanderer back to God.

'Tis heard!—'tis felt!—his course is stayed,
And mercy's call at length obeyed,—
The sorrowing sinner prays;
And angels strike in heaven the string,
And loud and far hosannas sing,
That God, by human means, should bring
One sinner from his ways.

THE GIPSY WANDERER.

A PARAPHRASE.

'Twas dark and cold, a winter's night,
The farmer by his fireside bright
Enjoyed its warmth and cheer,
When a faint cry without the door
Came mingling with the night-wind's roar
That swelled upon his ear.

"O, let me in!"—such was the cry,
"O, let me in! I faint, I die,
Here in the bitter blast!"
The farmer's kindly heart was moved,
He thought of one,—the lost and loved,—
And bade his servant haste.

Quickly the door was opened wide,
And hastening to the farmer's side
Came a young gipsy maid.
His brow with instant anger bent,
His eye quick, angry flashes sent,
His voice no welcome said.

"Go, get thee gone!" he quickly cried,
"Evil the gipsy race betide
Where'er they wandering go!
Of all I once held dear bereft,
How little to my heart they've left
None but myself can know!"

"Kind master," said the youthful guest,
"As late our tribe the church-yard passed
I paused a moment there;
I thought of where my mother lay
Low in a church-yard far away—
Alas! I know not where.

"While thus I mused nor thought of harm,
Suddenly came the blinding storm,
And thick the snow-flakes fell.
All blinded by the driving snow,
My limbs grew weak, my step grew slow,
My way I could not tell."

"Tis false!" the angry farmer cried,
"I know that gipsy tongue has lied;

'Twas craft that brought thee here.
Even now thy thievish gang lurks nigh,
And o'er the plunder how thy eye
Roams with a fiendish leer!"

Shrieking upon the floor she fell.—
"Oh, help the child! she knows you well!"—
'Twas thus the servant spake—
"She is thy own long stolen child,
And thoughts that throng her bosom wild
The cords of life may break!"

WEARY WITH TRAVEL.

'Tis gathering near the evening hours,
Long since have drooped the mid-day flowers,
O partner true and tried!
And many a mile we've left behind
Since you and I together joined—
There, where the pleasant paths combined—
To journey side by side.

So ardent we, so full of bliss,
We sought no choicest joys to miss
That filled the happy way;
What cared we for the rugged road,
For sharpest thorns our path that strewed,
For winds that blew, for sun that glowed
With fiery noontide ray!

But weary now of toil and race,
We'll pause amid this pleasant place
Our jaded feet to rest.

We'll talk of all the toilsome day,
Of scenes that beautified the way
Though which our ardent journey lay,
Through which we onward pressed.

Ah! weary one! you drowsy grow;
Our toil has been too great for you,
Though blended with delight.
I fain would have you wake awhile
The lonely evening to beguile,
With me to chat, with me to smile
O'er memories green and bright.

Already sleeping! Then I'll place
This snow-white stone your head to grace,
And this your feet to keep.
Sleep sweetly, love! Ay, sweetly now
Sleep with this kiss upon your brow,
And on your lips I press it too;—
Ah!—peaceful be your sleep!

And I—a little longer yet,
Wakeful, unrestful, let me wait
Till comes the shadier night.

Watchfully, silently, I'll tread
Around the marble at your head;
Then stretch my limbs beside your bed,
And wait the morning light.

RURAL SERENADE.

'Neath dark blue skies all sparkling lies
The dewy vale before us,
For day has fled, and night has spread
Its misty mantle o'er us.
O sleep to-night with bosom light
As winds their balm that bear thee;
And visions blest adorn thy rest
Of loved ones ever near thee.

The forest piles its shadowy aisles,
Like high-arched temples springing,
With wingèd choirs and thousand lyres
In chorus wild out-ringing.
Then sleep to-night,—the breezes light
The distant song shall bear thee,
And soothe thy rest with visions blest
Of loved one chanting near thee.

The silent skies with myriad eyes
Are bending, beaming round thee,

And milky zone around is thrown
  As if in love it bound thee.
Then sleep to-night with fancies bright
  As starry eyes above thee;
With visions sweet of eyes that greet
  And living hearts that love thee.

SONG.

GENTLE SPIRIT, LOVED AND LOVING.

GENTLE spirit, loved and loving,
Dost thou guard my lonely hours?
When I hear my curtain moving,
Is it thou the tassel stirs?

Art thou ever waiting, watching,
Present still though far away,
Every look and movement catching,—
Is it thou, my loved one, say?

If thy loving self could only
With thy loving thoughts but glide,
Then were I no longer lonely,—
Thou wert ever by my side.

TO AN UNKNOWN FRIEND.

How bright the world! What pleasures blend
Even with our pains! What comforts lend
    Their joys serene to life!
For God has given us many a green
And sunny spot to deck the scene,
    Even in a world of grief.

But blest, indeed, the lot of one
Who deems that life is but begun,
    When called upon to die.
Be thine, O friend, the faith to see,
Beyond this bright mortality,
    The brighter life on high.

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